Withdrawn from collection

811

26119

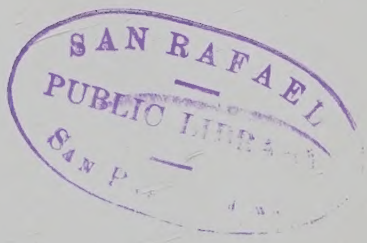
Riley, J.
Songs of summer.

DATE DUE

AUG 1 9 2003

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A.



RILEY SONGS OF SUMMER

RILEY
SONGS OF SUMMER

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

WITH PICTURES BY
WILL VAWTER

NEW YORK
GROSSET & DUNLAP
PUBLISHERS

Copyright 1883, 1887, 1888, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1894, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1903, 1905, 1907, 1908

by

James Whitcomb Riley

All Rights Reserved

TO

LEE O. HARRIS

TEACHER, FRIEND AND COMRADE

26 11 9

THE SUMMER-TIME

O, the summer-time to-day
Makes my words
Jes' flip up and fly away
Like the birds!
—'Taint no use to try to sing,
With yer language on the wing,
Jes' too glad fer anything
But to stray
Where it may
Thue the sunny summer weather of the day!

Lordy! what a summer-time
Fer to sing!
But my words flops out o' rhyme,
And they wing
Furder yit beyent the view
Than the swallers ever flew,
Er a mortal wanted to—
'Less his eye
Struck the sky
Ez he kind o' sort o' thought he'd like to fly!

Ef I COULD sing— weet and low—
And my tongue
Could twitter, don't you know,
Ez I sung
Of the summer-time, 'y Jings!
All the words and birds and things
That kin warble, and hes wings,
Would jes' swear
And declare
That they never heerd sich singin' anywhere!

CONTENTS

All-Golden, The 124
An Old Friend 25
At Ninety in the Shade 82
August 49
Ballade of the Coming Rain, The 153
Circus Parade, The 74
Clover, The 116
Country Pathway, A 143
Dawn, Noon and Dewfall 161
Down Around the River 59
Fishing Party, The 97
Full Harvest, A 115
Glimpse of Pan, A 72
He and I 178
Hoosier Spring-Poetry 103
In Swimming-Time 89
In the South 52
June 177
King, The 137
Knee-Deep in June 108
Laughing Song 57
Little Red Ribbon, The 46
Lullaby 94
McFeeters' Fourth 27
Me and Mary 67
Muskingum Valley, The 155
Noon Interval, A 170

CONTENTS—Continued

OLD-FASHIONED ROSES 133
OLD HAY-MOW, THE 162
OLD SWIMMIN'-HOLE, THE 119
ON THE BANKS O' DEER CRICK 41
ON THE SUNNY SIDE 173
PANSIES 107
POMONA 64
SHOWER, THE 38
SLUMBER-SONG 139
SONG, A 171
SUDDEN SHOWER, A 166
SUMMER'S DAY, A 19
THEM FLOWERS 54
TROUGHTS FER THE DISCURAGED FARMER . . . 33
TO LOLL BACK IN A MISTY HAMMOCK 40
TREE-TOAD, THE 87
UP AND DOWN OLD BRANDYWINE 182
VOICE FROM THE FARM, A 79
WHEN JUNE IS HERE 32
WHEN THE GREEN GITS BACK IN THE TREES . . 159
WHILE THE MUSICIAN PLAYED 101
WITH THE CURRENT 128
WRAITH OF SUMMERTIME, A 80
YELLOW-BIRD, THE 140

SAN RA

RILEY SONGS OF SUMMER

A SUMMER'S DAY

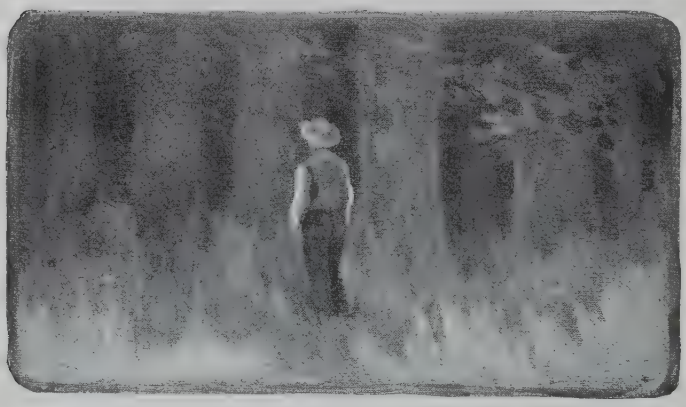
THE Summer's put the idy in
My head that I'm a boy again;
And all around's so bright and gay
I want to put my team away,
And jest git out whare I can lay
And soak my hide full of the day!
But work is work, and must be done—
Yit, as I work, I have my fun,
Jest fancyin' these furries here
Is childhood's paths onc't more so dear:—

And as I walk through medder-lands,
  And country lanes, and swampy trails
Whare long bullrushes bresh my hands;
  And, tilted on the ridered rails
    Of deadnin' fences, "Old Bob White"
    Whissels his name in high delight,
And whirrs away. I wunder still
Whichever way a boy's feet will—
Whare trees has fell, with tangled tops
  Whare dead leaves shakes, I stop fer breth,
Heerin' the acorn as it drops—
  H'istin' my chin up still as deth,
And watchin' clos't, with upturned eyes,
The tree where Mr. Squirrel tries
To hide hisse'f above the limb,
But lets his own tale tell on him.
I wunder on in deeper glooms—
  Git hungry, hearin' female cries
From old farm-houses, whare perfumes
  Of harvest dinners seems to rise
And ta'nt a feller, hart and brane,
With memories he can't explane.

I wunder through the underbresh,
  Whare pig-tracks, pintin' to'rds the crick,

Is picked and printed in the fresh
  Black bottom-lands, like wimmern pick
Theyr pie-crusts with a fork, some way,
When bakin' fer camp-meetin' day.
I wunder on and on and on,
Tel my gray hair and beard is gone,
And ev'ry wrinkle on my brow
Is rubbed clean out and shaddered now
With curls as brown and fare and fine
As tenderls of the wild grape-vine
That ust to climb the highest tree
To keep the ripest ones fer me.
I wunder still, and here I am
Wadin' the ford below the dam—
The worter chucklin' round my knee
  At hornet-welt and bramble-scratch,
And me a-slippin' 'crost to see
  Ef Tyner's plums is ripe, and size
The old man's wortermelon-patch,
  With juicy mouth and drouthy eyes.
Then, after sich a day of mirth
And happiness as worlds is wurth—

So tired that heaven seems nigh about,—
The sweetest tiredness on earth
Is to git home and flatten out—
So tired you can't lay flat enugh,
And sorto' wish that you could spred
Out like molasses on the bed,
And jest drip off the aidges in
The dreams that never comes again.



AN OLD FRIEND

HEY, Old Midsummer! are you here again,
With all your harvest-store of olden joys,—
Vast overhanging meadow-lands of rain,
And drowsy dawns, and noons when golden grain
Nods in the sun, and lazy truant boys
Drift ever listlessly adown the day,
Too full of joy to rest, and dreams to play.

The same old Summer, with the same old smile
Beaming upon us in the same old way
We knew in childhood! Though a weary while
Since that far time, yet memories reconcile
The heart with odorous breaths of clover-hay;
And again I hear the doves, and the sun streams through
The old barn-door just as it used to do.

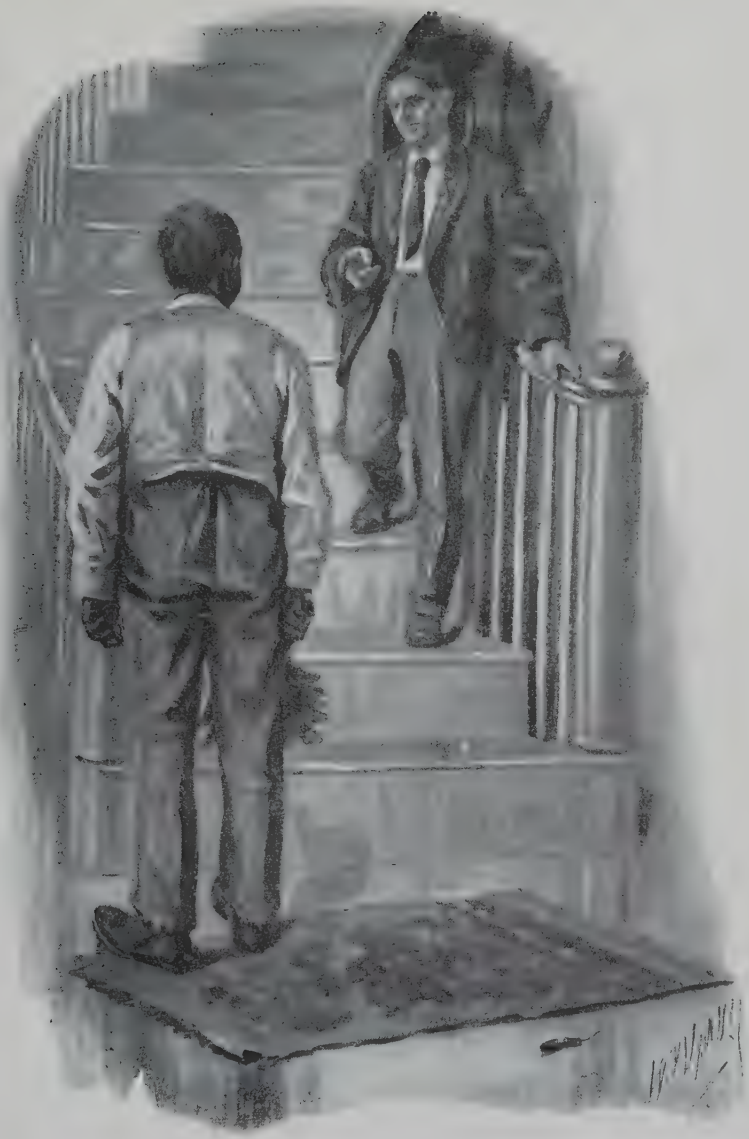
And so it seems like welcoming a friend—
An old, *old* friend, upon his coming home
From some far country—coming home to spend
Long, loitering days with me: And I extend
My hand in rapturous glee:—And so you've come!—
Ho, I'm so glad! Come in and take a chair:
Well, this is just like *old* times, I declare!

McFEETERS' FOURTH

IT was needless to say 'twas a glorious day,
And to boast of it all in that spread-eagle way
That our Forefathers had since the hour of the birth
Of this most patriotic republic on earth!
But 'twas justice, of course, to admit that the sight
Of the old Stars-and-Stripes was a thing of delight
In the eyes of a fellow, however he tried
To look on the day with a dignified pride
That meant not to brook any turbulent glee
Or riotous flourish of loud jubilee!

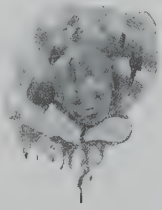
So argued McFeeters, all grim and severe,
Who the long night before, with a feeling of fear,
Had slumbered but fitfully, hearing the swish
Of the sky-rocket over his roof, with the wish
That the boy-fiend who fired it were fast to the end
Of the stick to for ever and ever ascend!
Or to hopelessly ask why the boy with the horn
And its horrible havoc had ever been born!
Or to wish, in his wakefulness, staring aghast,
That this Fourth of July were as dead as the last!

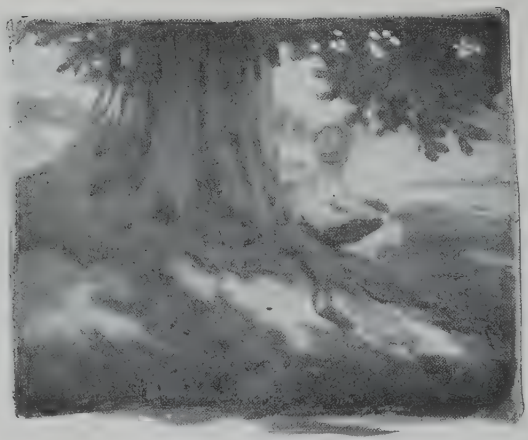
So, yesterday morning, McFeeters arose,
With a fire in his eyes, and a cold in his nose,
And a guttural voice in appropriate key
With a temper as gruff as a temper could be.
He growled at the servant he met on the stair,
Because he was whistling a national air,
And he growled at the maid on the balcony, who
Stood enrapt with the tune of "The Red-White-and-Blue"
That a band was discoursing like mad in the street,
With drumsticks that banged, and with cymbals that beat.



And he growled at his wife, as she buttoned his vest,
And applausively pinned a rosette on his breast
Of the national colors, and lured from his purse
Some change for the boys—for fire-crackers—or worse;
And she pointed with pride to a soldier in blue
In a frame on the wall, and the colors there, too;
And he felt, as he looked on the features, the glow
The painter found there twenty long years ago,
And a passionate thrill in his breast, as he felt
Instinctively round for the sword in his belt.

What was it that hung like a mist o'er the room?—
The tumult without—and the music—the boom
Of the cannon—the blare of the bugle and fife?—
No matter!—McFeeters was kissing his wife,
And laughing and crying and waving his hat
Like a genuine soldier, and crazy, at that!
—*Was* it needless to say 'twas a glorious day
And to boast of it all in that spread-eagle way
That our Forefathers had since the hour of the birth
Of this most patriotic republic on earth?





WHEN JUNE IS HERE

WHEN June is here—what art have we to sing
The whiteness of the lilies midst the green
On noon-tranced lawns? Or flash of roses seen
Like redbirds' wings? Or earliest ripening
Prince-Harvest apples, where the cloyed bees cling
Round winey juices oozing down between
The peckings of the robin, while we lean
In under-grasses, lost in marveling?
Or the cool term of morning, and the stir
Of odorous breaths from wood and meadow walks,
The bobwhite's liquid yodel, and the whir
Of sudden flight; and, where the milkmaid talks
Across the bars, on tilted barley-stalks
The dewdrops' glint in webs of gossamer?

THOUGHTS FER THE DISCURAGED FARMER

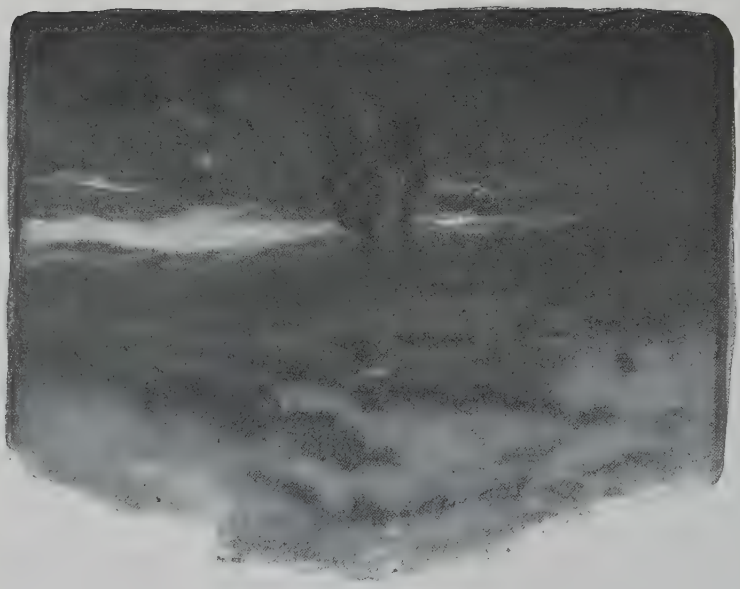
THE summer winds is sniffin' round the bloomin' locus' trees;
And the clover in the pastur is a big day fer the bees,
And they been a-swiggin' honey, above board and on the sly,
Tel they stutter in theyr buzzin' and stagger as they fly.
The flicker on the fence-rail 'pears to jest spit on his wings
And roll up his feathers, by the sassy way he sings;
And the hoss-fly is a-whettin'-up his forelegs fer biz,
And the off-mare is a-switchin' all of her tale they is.

You can hear the blackbirds jawin' as they foller up
the plow—
Oh, theyr bound to git theyr brekfast, and theyr not
a-carin' how;
So they quarrel in the furries, and they quarrel on the
wing—
But theyr peaceabler in pot-pies than any other thing:
And it's when I git my shotgun drawed up in stiddy
rest,
She's as full of tribbelation as a yeller-jacket's nest;
And a few shots before dinner, when the sun's a-shin-
in' right,
Seems to kindo'-sorto' sharpen up a feller's appetite!

They's been a heap o' rain, but the sun's out to-day,
And the clouds of the wet spell is all cleared away,
And the woods is all the greener, and the grass is
greener still;
It may rain again to-morry, but I don't think it will.
Some says the crops is ruined, and the corn's drownded
out,
And propha-sy the wheat will be a failure, without
doubt;
But the kind Providence that has never failed us yet,
Will be on hands onc't more at the 'leventh hour, I bet!

Does the medder-lark complane, as he swims high and dry
Through the waves of the wind and the blue of the sky?
Does the quail set up and whissel in a disappinted way,
Er hang his head in silunce, and sorrow all the day?
Is the chipmuck's health a-failin'?—Does he walk, er does he run?
Don't the buzzards ooze around up thare jest like they've allus done?
Is they anything the matter with the rooster's lungs er voice?
Ort a mortul be complainin' when dumb animals rejoice?

Then let us, one and all, be contentud with our lot;
The June is here this morning, and the sun is shining hot.
Oh! let us fill our harts up with the glory of the day,
And banish ev'ry doubt and care and sorrow fur away!
Whatever be our station, with Providence fer guide,
Sich fine circumstances ort to make us satisfied;
Fer the world is full of roses, and the roses full of dew,
And the dew is full of heavenly love that drips fer me and you.



THE SHOWER

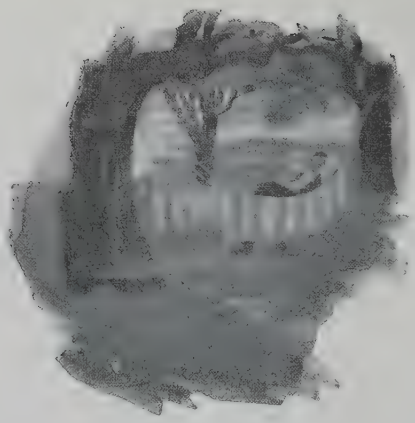
THE landscape, like the awed face of a child,
Grew curiously blurred; a hush of death
Fell on the fields, and in the darkened wild
The zephyr held its breath.

No wavering glamour-work of light and shade
Dappled the shivering surface of the brook;
The frightened ripples in their ambuscade
Of willows thrilled and shook.

The sullen day grew darker, and anon
Dim flashes of pent anger lit the sky;
With rumbling wheels of wrath came rolling on
The storm's artillery.

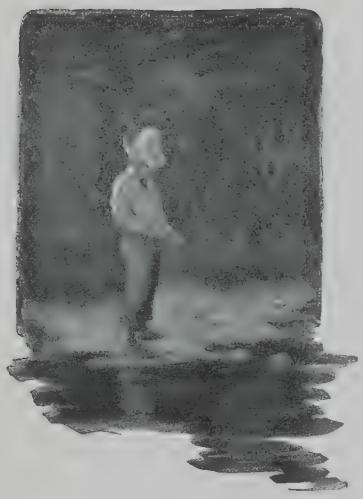
The cloud above put on its blackest frown,
And then, as with a vengeful cry of pain,
The lightning snatched it, ripped and flung it down
In ravelled shreds of rain:

While I, transfigured by some wondrous art,
Bowed with the thirsty lilies to the sod,
My empty soul brimmed over, and my heart
Drenched with the love of God.



TO LOLL BACK IN A MISTY HAMMOCK

TO loll back, in a misty hammock, swung
From tip to tip of a slim crescent moon
That gems some royal-purple night of June—
To dream of songs that never have been sung
Since the first stars were stilled and God was young
And heaven as lonesome as a lonesome tune:
To lie thus, lost to earth, with lids aswoon;
By curious, cool winds back and forward flung,
With fluttering hair, blurred eyes, and utter ease
Adrift like lazy blood through every vein;
And then,—the pulse of unvoiced melodies
Timing the raptured sense to some refrain
That knows nor words, nor rhymes, nor euphonies,
Save Fancy's hinted chime of unknown seas.



ON THE BANKS O' DEER CRICK

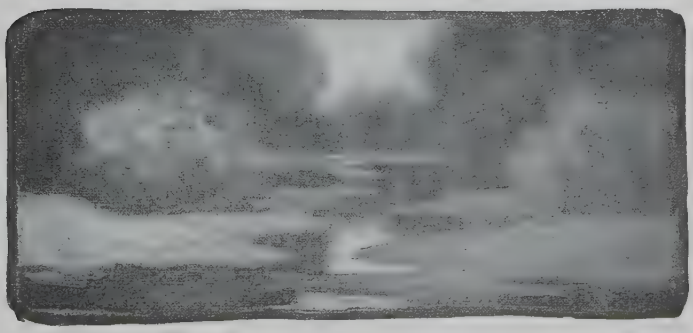
ON the banks o' Deer Crick! There's the place fer me!—
Worter slidin' past ye jes as clair as it kin be:—
See yer shadder in it, and the shadder o' the sky,
And the shadder o' the buzzard as he goes a-lazein' by;
Shadder o' the pizen-vines, and shadder o' the trees—
And I purt'-nigh said the shadder o' the sunshine and the breeze!
Well—I never seen the ocean ner I never seen the sea:
On the banks o' Deer Crick's grand enough fer me!

ON THE BANKS O DEER CRICK

On the banks o' Deer Crick—mild er two from town—
'Long up where the mill-race comes a-loafin' down,—
Like to git up in there—'mongst the sycamores—
And watch the worter at the dam, a-frothin' as she pours:
Crawl out on some old log, with my hook and line,
Where the fish is jes so thick, you kin see 'em shine
As they flicker round yer bait, *coaxin'* you to jerk,
Tel yer tired ketchin' of 'em, mighty nigh, as *work!*

On the banks o' Deer Crick!—Allus my delight
Jes to be around there—take it day er night!—
Watch the snipes and killdees foolin' half the day—
Er these-'ere little worter-bugs skootin' ever' way!—
Snakefeeders glancin' round, er dartin' out o' sight;
And dew-fall, and bullfrogs, and lightnin'-bugs at night—
Stars up through the tree-tops—er in the crick below,—
And smell o' mussrat through the dark clean from the old b'y-o!

Er take a tromp, some Sund'y, say, 'way up to "Johnson's Hole,"
And find where he's had a fire, and hid his fishin'-pole:
Have yer "dog-leg" with ye and yer pipe and "cut-and-dry"—
Pocketful o' corn-bred, and slug er two o' rye,—
Soak yer hide in sunshine and waller in the shade—
Like the Good Book tells us—"where there're none to make afraid!"
Well!—I never seen the ocean ner I never seen the sea—
On the banks o' Deer Crick's grand enough fer me!



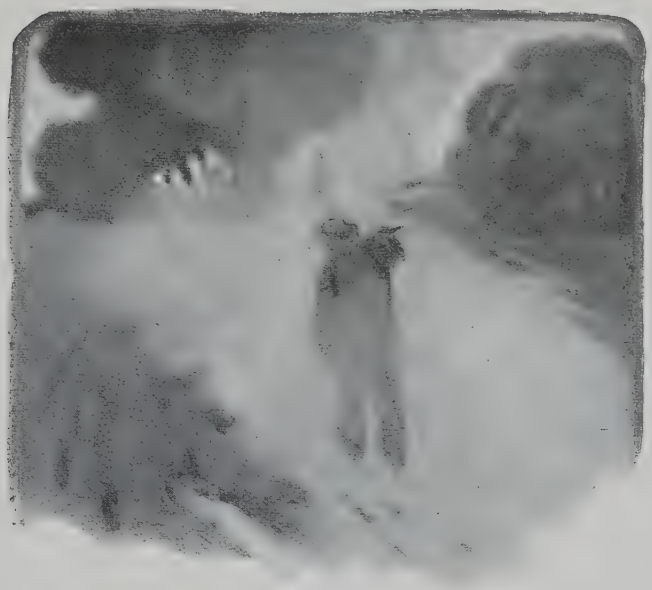
THE LITTLE RED RIBBON

THE little red ribbon, the ring and the rose!
The summertime comes and the summertime goes—
And never a blossom in all of the land
As white as the gleam of her beckoning hand!

The long winter months, and the glare of the snows;
The little red ribbon, the ring and the rose!
And never a glimmer of sun in the skies
As bright as the light of her glorious eyes!

Dreams only are true; but they fade and are gone—
For her face is not here when I waken at dawn;
The little red ribbon, the ring and the rose
Mine only; *hers* only the dream and repose.

I am weary of waiting, and weary of tears,
And my heart wearies, too, all these desolate years,
Moaning over the one only song that it knows,—
The little red ribbon, the ring and the rose!



AUGUST

A DAY of torpor in the sullen heat
Of Summer's passion: In the sluggish stream
The panting cattle lave their lazy feet,
With drowsy eyes, and dream.

Long since the winds have died, and in the sky
There lives no cloud to hint of Nature's grief;
The sun glares ever like an evil eye,
And withers flower and leaf.

Upon the gleaming harvest-field remote
The thresher lies deserted, like some old
Dismantled galleon that hangs afloat
Upon a sea of gold.

The yearning cry of some bewildered bird
Above an empty nest, and truant boys
Along the river's shady margin heard—
A harmony of noise—

A melody of wrangling voices blent
With liquid laughter, and with rippling calls
Of piping lips and thrilling echoes sent
To mimic waterfalls.

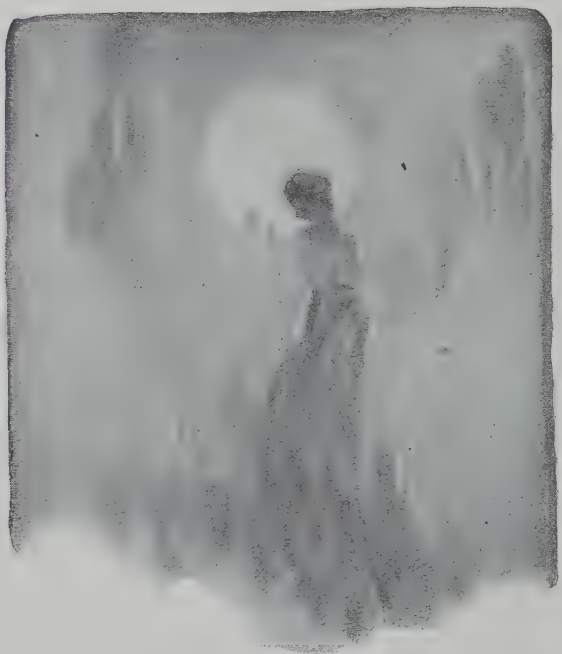
And through the hazy veil the atmosphere
Has draped about the gleaming face of Day,
The sifted glances of the sun appear
In splinterings of spray.

The dusty highway, like a cloud of dawn,
Trails o'er the hillside, and the passer-by,
A tired ghost in misty shroud, toils on
His journey to the sky.

And down across the valley's drooping sweep,
  Withdrawn to farthest limit of the glade,
The forest stands in silence, drinking deep
  Its purple wine of shade.

The gossamer floats up on phantom wing;
  The sailor-vision voyages the skies
And carries into chaos everything
  That freights the weary eyes:

Till, throbbing on and on, the pulse of heat
  Increases—reaches—passes fever's height,
And Day sinks into slumber, cool and sweet,
  Within the arms of Night.



IN THE SOUTH

THERE is a princess in the South
About whose beauty rumors hum
Like honey-bees about the mouth
Of roses dewdrops falter from;
And O her hair is like the fine
Clear amber of a jostled wine
In tropic revels; and her eyes
Are blue as rifts of Paradise.

Such beauty as may none before
  Kneel daringly, to kiss the tips
Of fingers such as knights of yore
  Had died to lift against their lips:
    Such eyes as might the eyes of gold
    Of all the stars of night behold
    With glittering envy, and so glare
    In dazzling splendor of despair.

So, were I but a minstrel, deft
  At weaving, with the trembling strings
Of my glad harp, the warp and weft
  Of rondels such as rapture sings,—
    I'd loop my lyre across my breast,
    Nor stay me till my knee found rest
    In midnight banks of bud and flower
    Beneath my lady's lattice-bower.

And there, drenched with the teary dews,
  I'd woo her with such wondrous art
As well might stanch the songs that ooze
  Out of the mockbird's breaking heart;
    So light, so tender, and so sweet
    Should be the words I would repeat,
    Her casement, on my gradual sight,
    Would blossom as a lily might.

THEM FLOWERS

TAKE a feller 'at's sick and laid up on the shelf,
All shaky, and ga'nted, and pore—
Jes all so knocked out he can't handle hisself
With a stiff upper-lip any more;
Shet him up all alone in the gloom of a room
As dark as the tomb, and as grim,
And then take and send him some roses in bloom,
And you can have fun out o' him!

You've ketched him 'fore now—when his liver was sound
And his appetite notched like a saw—
A-mockin' you, mayby, fer romancin' round
With a big posy-bunch in yer paw;
But you ketch him, say, when his health is away,
And he's flat on his back in distress,
And *then* you kin trot out yer little bokay
And not be insulted, I guess!

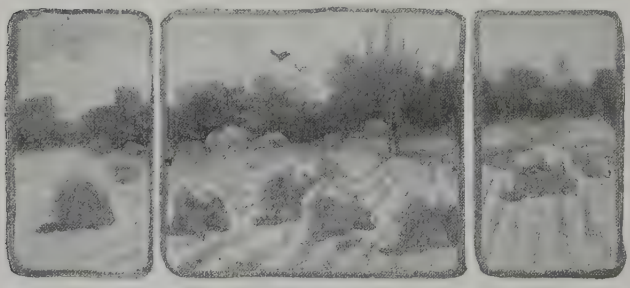
You see, it's like this, what his weaknesses is,—
Them flowers makes him think of the days
Of his innocent youth, and that mother o' his,
And the roses that *she* us't to raise:—
So here, all alone with the roses you send—
Bein' sick and all trimbly and faint,—
My eyes is—my eyes is—my eyes is—old friend—
Is a-leakin'—I'm blamed ef they ain't!

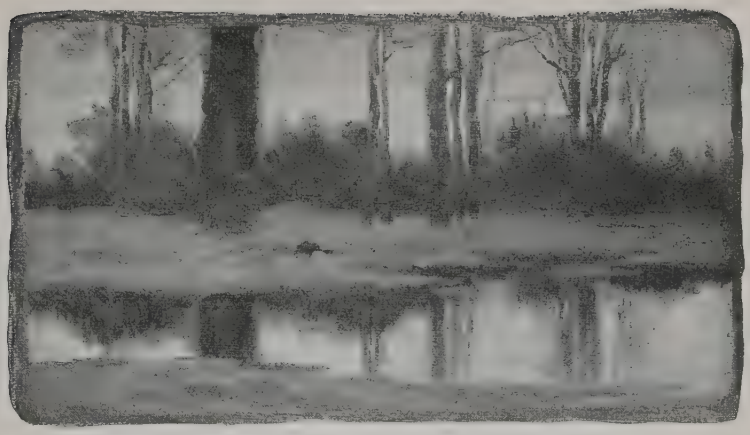
LAUGHING SONG

SING us something full of laughter;
Tune your harp, and twang the strings
Till your glad voice, chirping after,
Mates the song the robin sings:
Loose your lips and let them flutter
Like the wings of wanton birds,—
Though they naught but laughter utter,
Laugh, and we'll not miss the words.

Sing in ringing tones that mingle
In a melody that flings
Joyous echoes in a jingle
Sweeter than the minstrel sings:
Sing of Winter, Spring or Summer,
Clang of war, or low of herds;
Trill of cricket, roll of drummer—
Laugh, and we'll not miss the words.

Like the lisping laughter glancing
From the meadow brooks and springs,
Or the river's ripples dancing
To the tune the current sings—
Sing of Now, and the Hereafter;
Let your glad song, like the birds',
Overflow with limpid laughter—
Laugh, and we'll not miss the words.



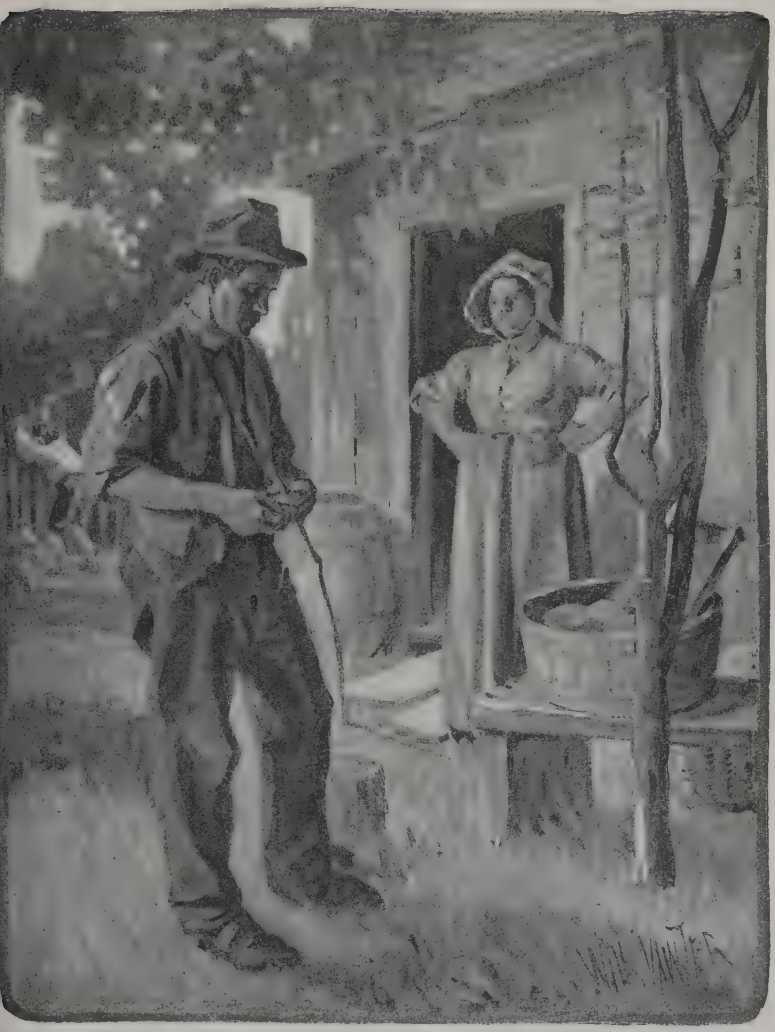


DOWN AROUND THE RIVER

NOON-TIME an' June-time, down around the river!
Have to furse with 'Lizey Ann—but lawzy! I fergive her!
Drives me off the place, an' says 'at all 'at she's a-wishin',
Land o' gracious! time'll come I'll git enough o' fishin'!
Little Dave, a-choppin' wood, never 'pears to notice;
Don't know where she's hid his hat, er keerin' where his coat is,—
Specalatin', more'n like, he hain't a-goin' to mind me,
An' guessin' where, say twelve o'clock, a feller'd likely find me!

Noon-time an' June-time, down around the river!
Clean out o' sight o' home, an' skulkin' under kivver
Of the sycamores, jack-oaks, an' swamp-ash an' ellum—
Idies all so jumbled up, you kin hardly tell 'em!—
Tired, you know, but *lovin'* it, an' smilin' jes' to think 'at
Any *sweeter* tiredness you'd fairly want to *drink* it!
Tired o' fishin'—tired o' fun—line out slack an' slacker—
All you want in all the world's a little more tobacker!

Hungry, but *a-hidin'* it, er jes' a-not a-keerin :—
King-fisher gittin' up an' skootin' out o' hearin';
Snipes on the t'other side, where the County Ditch is,
Wadin' up an' down the aidge like they'd rolled their britches!
Old turkle on the root kindo'-sorto' drappin'
Intoo th' worter like he don't know how it happen!
Worter, shade an' all so mixed, don't know which you'd orter
Say: th' *worter* in the shadder—*shadder* in the *worter!*



Somebody hollerin'—'way around the bend in
Upper Fork—where yer eye kin jes' ketch the endin'
Of the shiney wedge o' wake some muss-rat's a-makin'
With that pesky nose o' his! Then a sniff o' bacon,
Corn-bred an' 'dock-greens—an' little Dave a-shinnin'
'Crost the rocks an' mussel-shells, a-limpin' an' a-grinnin',
With yer dinner fer ye, an' a blessin' from the giver.
Noon-time an' June-time, down around the river!

POMONA

OH, the golden afternoon!—
Like a ripened summer day
That had fallen oversoon
In the weedy orchard-way—
As an apple, ripe in June.

He had left his fishrod leant
O'er the footlog by the spring—
Clomb the hill-path's high ascent,
Whence a voice, down showering,
Lured him, wondering as he went.

Not the voice of bee nor bird,
  Nay, nor voice of man nor child,
Nor the creek's shoal-alto heard
  Blent with warblings sweet and wild
Of the midstream, music-stirred.

'Twas a goddess! As the air
  Swirled to eddying silence, he
Glimpsed about him, half aware
  Of some subtle sorcery
Woven round him everywhere.

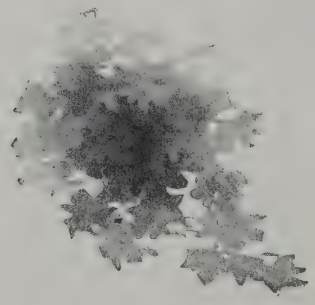
Suavest slopes of pleasaunce, sown
  With long lines of fruited trees
Weighed o'er grasses all unmown
  But by scythings of the breeze
In prone swaths that flashed and shone

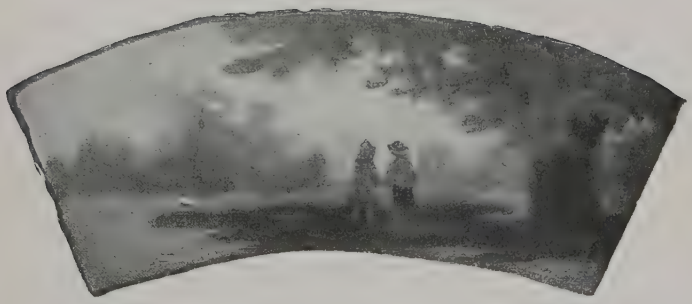
Like silk locks of Faunus sleeked
  This, that way, and contrawise,
Thro' whose bredes ambrosial leaked
  Oily amber sheens and dyes,
Starred with petals purple-freaked.

Here the bellflower swayed and swung,
  Greenly belfried high amid
Thick leaves in whose covert sung
  Hermit-thrush, or katydid,
Or the glowworm nightly clung.

Here the damson, peach and pear;
  There the plum, in Tyrian tints,
Like great grapes in clusters rare;
  And the metal-heavy quince
Like a plummet dangled there.

All ethereal, yet all
  Most material,—a theme
Of some fabled festival—
  Save the fair face of his dream
Smiling o'er the orchard wall.





ME AND MARY

ALL my feelin's in the Spring
Gits so blame contrary,
I can't think of anything
Only me and Mary!
"Me and Mary!" all the time,
"Me and Mary!" like a rhyme,
Keeps a-dingin' on till I'm
Sick o' "Me and Mary!"

"Me and Mary! Ef us two
  Only was together—
Playin' like we used to do
  In the Aprile weather!"
All the night and all the day
I keep wishin' thataway
Till I'm gittin' old and gray
  Jes on "Me and Mary!"

Muddy yit along the pike
  Sence the Winter's freezin',
And the orchard's back'ard-like
  Bloomin' out this season;
Only heerd one bluebird yit—
Nary robin ner tomtit;
What's the how and why of it?
  'Spect it's "Me and Mary!"

Me and Mary liked the birds—
  That is, *Mary* sorto'
Liked 'em first, and afterwards,
  W'y, I thought *I'd* ort'o.
And them birds—ef Mary stood
Right here with me, like she should—
They'd be singin', them birds would,
  All fer me and Mary.

Birds er not, I'm hopin' some
  I can git to plowin'!
Ef the sun'll only come,
  And the Lord allowin',
Guess to-morry I'll turn in
And git down to work ag'in;
This here loaferin' won't win,
  Not fer me and Mary!

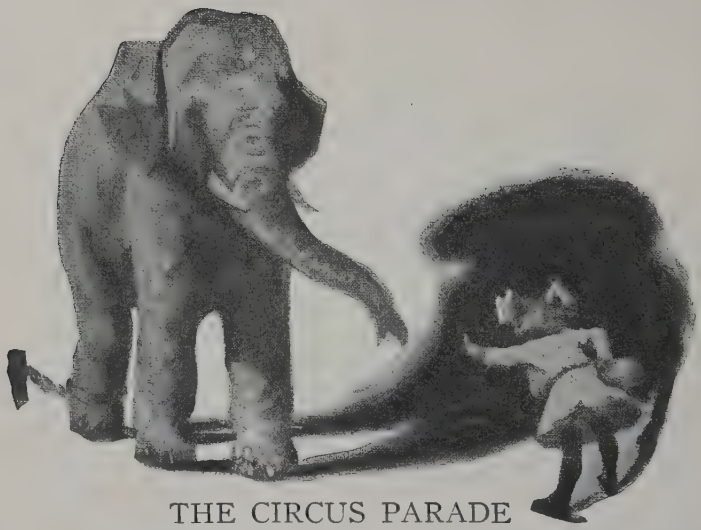
Fer a man that loves, like me,
  And's afeard to name it,
Till some other feller, he
  Gits the girl—dad-shame-it!
Wet er dry, er clouds er sun—
Winter gone er jes begun—
Outdoor work fer me er none,
  No more "Me and Mary!"

A GLIMPSE OF PAN

I CAUGHT but a glimpse of him. Summer was here,
And I strayed from the town and its dust and heat
And walked in a wood, while the noon was near,
Where the shadows were cool, and the atmosphere
Was misty with fragrances stirred by my feet
From surges of blossoms that billowed sheer
O'er the grasses, green and sweet.

And I peered through a vista of leaning trees,
  Tressed with long tangles of vines that swept
To the face of a river, that answered these
With vines in the wave like the vines in the breeze,
  Till the yearning lips of the ripples crept
And kissed them, with quavering ecstasies,
  And gurgled and laughed and wept.

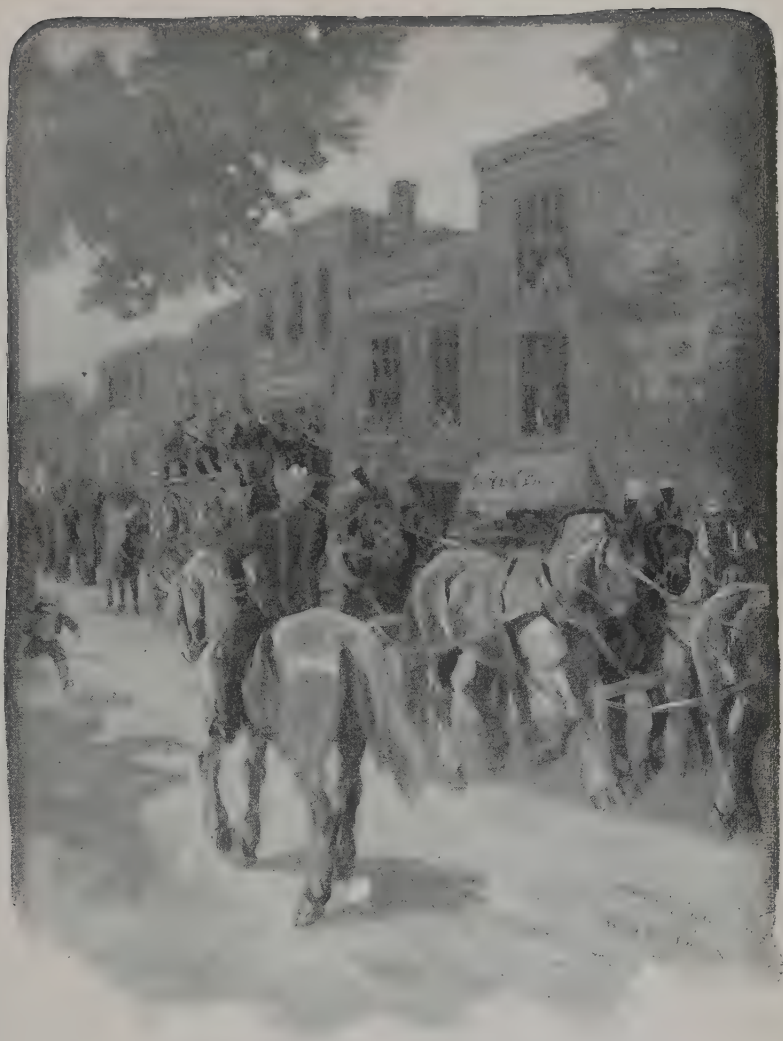
And there, like a dream in a swoon, I swear
  I saw Pan lying,—his limbs in the dew
And the shade, and his face in the dazzle and glare
Of the glad sunshine; while everywhere,
  Over, across, and around him blew
Filmy dragonflies hither and there,
  And little white butterflies, two and two,
    In eddies of odorous air.



THE CIRCUS PARADE

THE Circus!—The Circus!—The throb of the drums,
And the blare of the horns, as the Band-wagon comes;
The clash and the clang of the cymbals that beat,
As the glittering pageant winds down the long street!

In the Circus parade there is glory clean down
From the first spangled horse to the mule of the Clown,
With the gleam and the glint and the glamour and glare
Of the days of enchantment all glimmering there!



And there are the banners of silvery fold
Caressing the winds with their fringes of gold,
And their high-lifted standards, with spear-tips aglow,
And the helmeted knights that go riding below.

There's the Chariot, wrought of some marvelous shell
The Sea gave to Neptune, first washing it well
With its fabulous waters of gold, till it gleams
Like the galleon rare of an Argonaut's dreams.

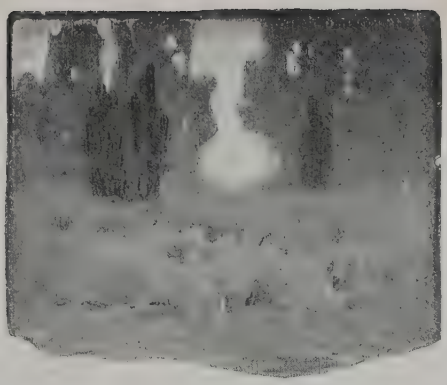
And the Elephant, too, (with his undulant stride
That rocks the high throne of a king in his pride),
That in jungles of India shook from his flanks
The tigers that leapt from the Jujubee-banks.

Here's the long, ever-changing, mysterious line
Of the Cages, with hints of their glories divine
From the barred little windows, cut high in the rear,
Where the close-hidden animals' noses appear.

Here's the Pyramid-car, with its splendor and flash,
And the Goddess on high, in a hot-scarlet sash
And a pen-wiper skirt!—O, the rarest of sights
Is this "Queen of the Air" in cerulean tights!

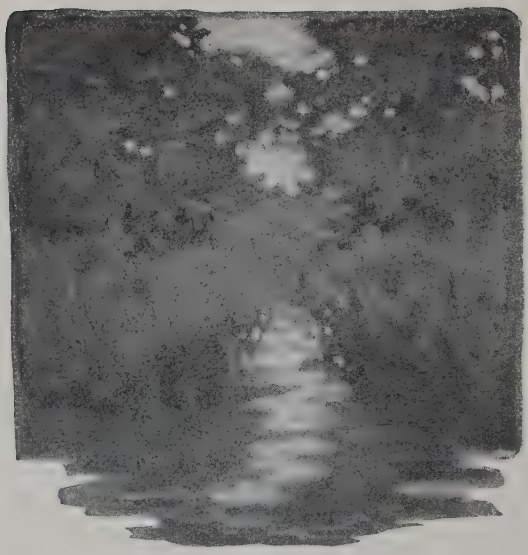
Then the far-away clash of the cymbals, and then
The swoon of the tune ere it wakens again
With the capering tones of the gallant cornet
That go dancing away in a mad minuet.

The Circus!—The Circus!—The throb of the drums,
And the blare of the horns, as the Band-wagon comes;
The clash and the clang of the cymbals that beat,
As the glittering pageant winds down the long street.



A VOICE FROM THE FARM

IT is my dream to have you here with me,
Out of the heated city's dust and din—
Here where the colts have room to gambol in,
And kine to graze, in clover to the knee.
I want to see your wan face happily
Lit with the wholesome smiles that have not been
In use since the old games you used to win
When we pitched horseshoes: And I want to be
At utter loaf with you in this dim land
Of grove and meadow, while the crickets make
Our own talk tedious, and the bat wields
His bulky flight, as we cease converse and
In a dusk like velvet smoothly take
Our way toward home across the dewy fields.



A WRAITH OF SUMMERTIME

IN its color, shade and shine,
'Twas a summer warm as wine,
With an effervescent flavoring of flowered
bough and vine,
And a fragrance and a taste
Of ripe roses gone to waste,
And a dreamy sense of sun- and moon- and
star-light interlaced.

'Twas a summer such as broods
O'er enchanted solitudes,
Where the hand of Fancy leads us through
voluptuary moods,
And with lavish love out-pours
All the wealth of out-of-doors,
And woos our feet o'er velvet paths and
honeysuckle floors.

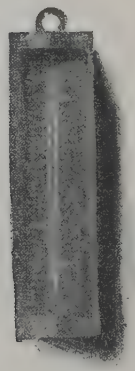
'Twas a summertime long dead,—
And its roses, white and red,
And its reeds and water-lilies down along the
river-bed,—
O, they all are ghostly things—
For the ripple never sings,
And the rocking lily never even rustles as it
rings!

AT NINETY IN THE SHADE

HOT weather? Yes; but really not,
Compared with weather twice as hot.
Find comfort, then, in arguing thus,
And you'll pull through victorious!—
For instance, while you gasp and pant
And try to cool yourself—and can't—
With soda, cream and lemonade,
The heat at ninety in the shade,—
Just calmly sit and ponder o'er
These same degrees, with ninety more
On top of them, and so concede
The weather now is cool indeed!

Think—as the perspiration dews
Your fevered brow, and seems to ooze
From out the ends of every hair—
Whole floods of it, with floods to spare—
Think, I repeat, the while the sweat
Pours down your spine—how hotter yet
Just ninety *more* degrees would be,
And bear *this* ninety patiently!
Think—as you mop your brow and hair,
With sticky feelings everywhere—
How ninety more degrees increase
Of heat like this would start the grease;
Or, think, as you exhausted stand,
A wilted "palmleaf" in each hand—
When the thermometer has done
With ease the lap of ninety-one;
O, think, I say, what heat might do
At one hundred and eighty-two—
Just twice the heat you now declare,
Complainingly, is hard to bear.
Or, as you watch the mercury
Mount, still elate, one more degree,
And doff your collar and cravat,
And rig a sponge up in your hat,

And ask Tom, Harry, Dick or Jim,
If this is hot enough for him—
Consider how the sun would pour
At one hundred and eighty-four—
Just twice the heat that seems to be
Affecting you unpleasantly,
The very hour that you might find
As cool as dew, were you inclined.
But why proceed when none will heed
Advice apportioned to the need?
Hot weather? Yes; but really not,
Compared with weather twice as hot!



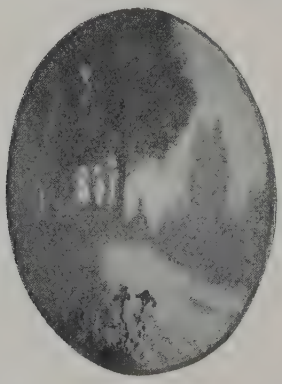
THE TREE-TOAD

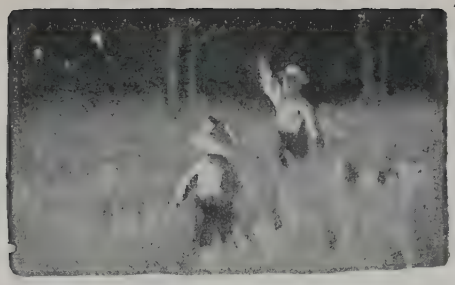
'SCUR'OUS-LIKE," said the tree-toad,
"I've twittered fer rain all day;
And I got up soon,
And hollered tel noon—
But the sun, hit blazed away,
Tel I jest clumb down in a crawfish-hole,
Weary at hart, and sick at soul!

"Dozed away ter an hour,
And I tackled the thing agin:
And I sung, and sung,
Tel I knowed my lung
Was jest about give in;
And *then,* thinks I, ef hit don't rain *now,*
They's nothin' in singin', anyhow!

"Onc't in a while some farmer
Would come a-drivin' past;
And he'd hear my cry,
And stop and sigh—
Tel I jest laid back, at last,
And I hollered rain tel I thought my th'oat
Would bust wide open at ever' note!

"But I *fetched* her!—O, *I fetched* her—
'Cause a little while ago,
As I kindo' set,
With one eye shet,
And a-singin' soft and low,
A voice drapped down on my fevered brain,
A-sayin',—*'Ef you'll jest hush I'll rain!'* "





IN SWIMMING-TIME

CLOUDS above, as white as wool,
Drifting over skies as blue
As the eyes of beautiful
Children when they smile at you:
Groves of maple, elm and beech,
With the sunshine sifted through
Branches, mingling each with each,
Dim with shade and bright with dew.

Stripling trees, and poplars hoar,
Hickory and sycamore,
And the drowsy dogwood, bowed
Where the ripples laugh aloud,
And the crooning creek is stirred
To a gaiety that now
Mates the warble of the bird,
Teetering on the hazel-bough.

Grasses long and fine and fair
As your schoolboy-sweetheart's hair
Backward stroked and twirled and twined
By the fingers of the wind:
Vines and mosses interlinked
  Down dark aisles and deep ravines,
Where the stream runs, willow-brinked,
  Round a bend where some one leans,
Faint, and vague, and indistinct
  As the like-reflected thing
  In the current shimmering.

Childish voices, further on,
Where the truant stream has gone,
Vex the echoes of the wood
Till no word is understood—
Save that we are well aware
Happiness is hiding there:—
There, in leafy coverts, nude
  Little bodies poise and leap,
Spattering the solitude
And the silence, everywhere—
  Mimic monsters of the deep!—

Wallowing in sandy shoals—
  Plunging headlong out of sight,
  And, with spurtings of delight,
Clutching hands, and slippery soles,
  Climbing up the treacherous steep,
Over which the spring-board spurns
Each again as he returns!
Ah! the glorious carnival!
  Purple lips—and chattering teeth—
  Eyes that burn—But, in beneath,
Every care beyond recall—
  Every task forgotten quite—
  And again in dreams at night,
Dropping, drifting through it all!

LULLABY

THE maple strews the embers of its leaves
O'er the laggard swallows nestled 'neath the eaves;
And the moody cricket falters in his cry—Baby-bye!—
And the lid of night is falling o'er the sky—Baby-bye!—
The lid of night is falling o'er the sky!

The rose is lying pallid, and the cup
Of the frosted calla-lily folded up;
And the breezes through the garden sob and sigh—Baby-bye!—
O'er the sleeping blooms of summer where they lie—Baby-bye!—
O'er the sleeping blooms of summer where they lie!

Yet, Baby—O my Baby, for your sake
This heart of mine is ever wide awake,
And my love may never droop a drowsy eye—Baby-bye!—
Till your own are wet above me when I die—Baby-bye!—
Till your own are wet above me when I die.

THE FISHING PARTY

WUNST we went a-fishin'—Me
An' my Pa an' Ma all three,
When they was a pic-nic, 'way
Out to Hanch's woods, one day.

An' they was a crick out there,
Where the fishes is, an' where
Little boys 'taint big an' strong,
Better have their folks along!

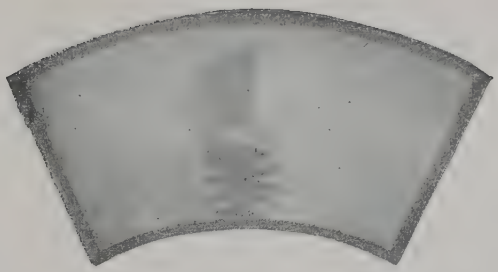
My Pa he ist fished an' fished!
An' my Ma she said she wished
Me an' her was home; an' Pa
Said he wished so worse'n Ma.

Pa said ef you talk, er say
Anything, er sneeze, er play,
Hain't no fish, alive er dead,
Ever go' to bite! he said.

Purt' nigh dark in town when we
Got back home; an' Ma says she,
Now she'll have a fish fer shore!
An' she buyed one at the store.

Nen at supper, Pa he won't
Eat no fish, an' says he don't
Like 'em.—An' he pounded me
When I choked! . . . Ma, didn't he?

SAN RAFAEL
PUBLIC LIBRARY
SAN RAFAEL, CAL.



WHILE THE MUSICIAN PLAYED

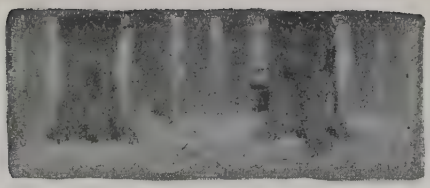
O IT was but a dream I had
While the musician played!—
And here the sky, and here the glad
Old ocean kissed the glade—
And here the laughing ripples ran,
And here the roses grew
That threw a kiss to every man
That voyaged with the crew.

Our silken sails in lazy folds
Drooped in the breathless breeze:
As o'er a field of marigolds
Our eyes swam o'er the seas;
While here the eddies lisped and purled
Around the island's rim,
And up from out the underworld
We saw the mermen swim.

And it was dawn and middle-day
And midnight—for the moon
On silver rounds across the bay
Had climbed the skies of June—
And there the glowing, glorious king
Of day ruled o'er his realm,
With stars of midnight glittering
About his diadem.

The seagull reeled on languid wing
In circles round the mast,
We heard the songs the sirens sing
As we went sailing past;
And up and down the golden sands
A thousand fairy throngs
Flung at us from their flashing hands
The echoes of their songs.

O, it was but a dream I had
While the musician played—
For here the sky, and here the glad
Old ocean kissed the glade;
And here the laughing ripples ran,
And here the roses grew
That threw a kiss to every man
That voyaged with the crew.



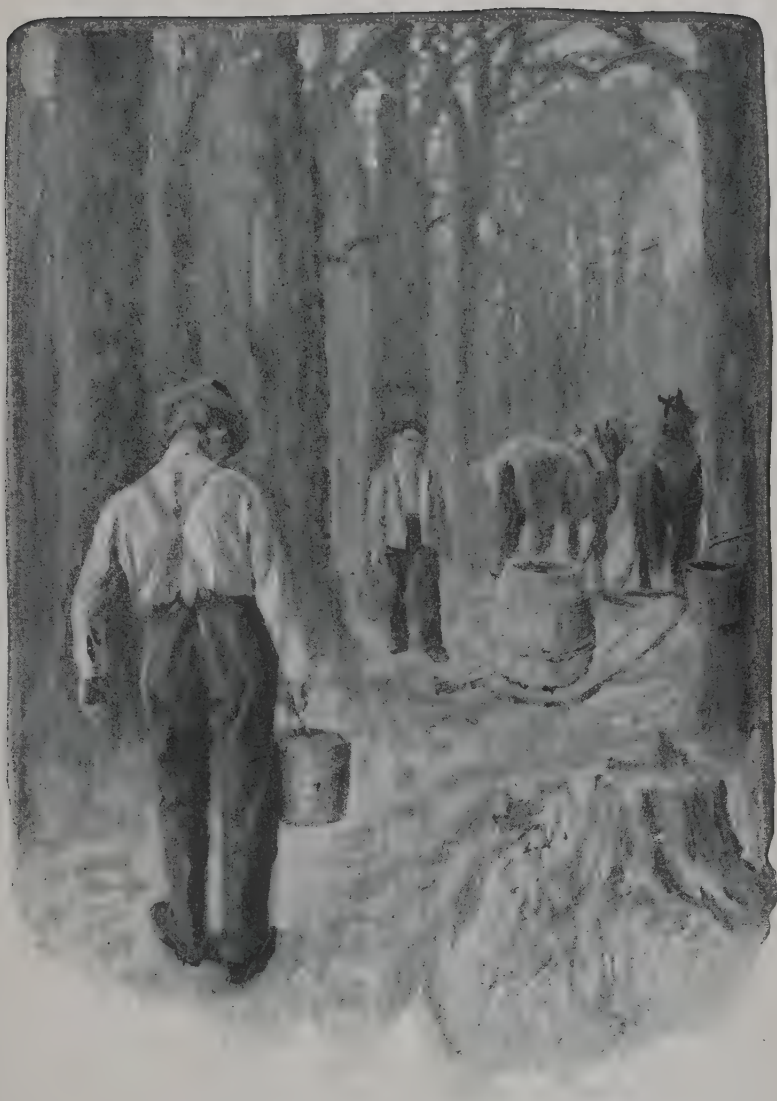
HOOSIER SPRING-POETRY

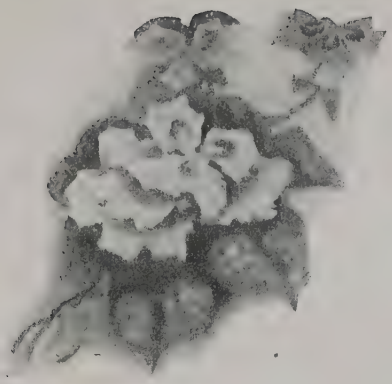
WHEN ever'thing's a-goin' like she's got-a-goin' now,—
The maple-sap a-drippin', and the buds on ever' bough
A-sorto' reachin' up'ards all a-trimblin', ever' one,
Like 'bout a million brownie-fists a-shakin' at the sun!
The childern wants their shoes off 'fore their breakfast, and the Spring
Is here so good-and-plenty that the old hen has to sing!—
When things is goin' *thisaway,* w'y, that's the sign, you know,
That ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!

Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!
Old Winter's up and dusted, with his dratted frost and snow—
The ice is out the crick ag'in, the freeze is out the ground,
And you'll see faces thawin' too ef you'll jes look around!—

The bluebird's landin' home ag'in, and glad to git the
chance,
'Cause here's where he belongs at, that's a settled cir-
cumstance!
And him and mister robin now's a-chunin' fer the
show.
Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!

The sun ain't jes p'tendin' *now!*—The ba'm is in the
breeze—
The trees'll soon be green as grass, and grass as green
as trees;
The buds is all jes *eechin',* and the dogwood down
the run
Is bound to bust out laughin' 'fore another week is
done;
The bees is wakin', gap'y-like, and fumblin' fer their
buzz,
A-thinkin', ever-wakefuler, of other days that wuz,—
When all the land wuz orchard-blooms and clover,
don't you know. . . .
Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!

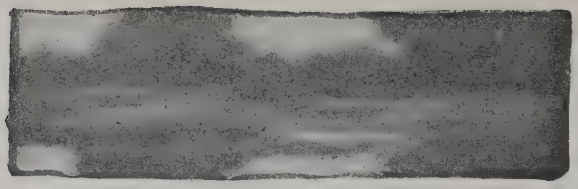




PANSIES

PANSIES! Pansies! How I love you, pansies!
Jaunty-faced, laughing-lipped and dewy-eyed with glee;
Would my song but blossom in little five-leaf stanzas
As delicate in fancies
As your beauty is to me!

But my eyes shall smile on you, and my hands infold you,
Pet, caress, and lift you to the lips that love you so,
That, shut ever in the years that may mildew or mould you,
My fancy shall behold you
Fair as in the long ago.



KNEE-DEEP IN JUNE

I

TELL you what I like the best—
'Long about knee-deep in June,
'Bout the time strawberries melts
On the vine,—some afternoon
Like to jes' git out and rest,
And not work at nothin' else!

II

Orchard's where I'd ruther be—
Needn't fence it in fer me!—
Jes' the whole sky overhead,
And the whole airth underneath—
Sorto' so's a man kin breathe
Like he ort, and kindo' has
Elbow-room to keerlessly
Sprawl out len'thways on the grass
Where the shadders thick and soft
As the kivvers on the bed
Mother fixes in the loft
Allus, when they's company!

III

Jes' a-sorto' lazin' there—
S'lazy 'at you peek and peer
Through the wavin' leaves above,
Like a feller 'at's in love
And don't know it, ner don't keer!
Ever'thing you hear and see
Got some sort o' interest—
Maybe find a bluebird's nest
Tucked up there conveenently
Fer the boy 'at's ap' to be
Up some other apple-tree!
Watch the swallers skootin' past
'Bout as peert as you could ast;
Er the Bob-white raise and whizz
Where some other's whistle is.

IV

Ketch a shadder down below,
And look up to find the crow—
Er a hawk,—away up there,
'Pearantly *froze* in the air!—
Hear the old hen squawk, and squat
Over ever' chick she's got,

Suddent-like!—and she knows where
That-air hawk is, well as you!—
You jes' bet yer life she do!—
Eyes a-glitterin' like glass,
Waitin' till he makes a pass!

V

Pee-wees' singin', to express
My opinion, 's second class,
Yit you'll hear 'em more er less;
Sapsucks gittin' down to biz,
Weedin' out the lonesomeness;
Mr. Bluejay, full o' sass,
In them base-ball clothes o' his,
Sportin' round the orchard jes'
Like he owned the premises!
Sun out in the fields kin sizz,
But flat on yer back, I guess,
In the shade's where glory is!
That's jes' what I'd like to do
Stiddy fer a year er two!

VI

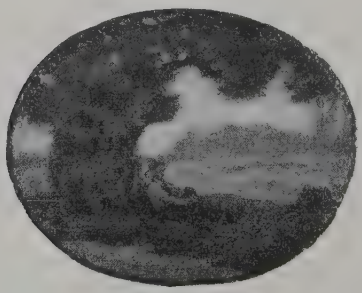
Plague! ef they ain't somepin' in
Work 'at kindo' goes ag'in'
My convictions!—'long about
Here in June especially!—
Under some old apple-tree,
Jes' a-restin' through and through,
I could git along without
Nothin' else at all to do
Only jes' a-wishin' you
Wuz a-gittin' there like me,
And June was eternity!

VII

Lay out there and try to see
Jes' how lazy you kin be!—
Tumble round and souse yer head
In the clover-bloom, er pull
Yer straw hat acrost yer eyes
And peek through it at the skies,
Thinkin' of old chums 'at's dead,
Maybe, smilin' back at you
In betwixt the beautiful
Clouds o' gold and white and blue!—
Month a man kin railly love—
June, you know, I'm talkin' of!

VIII

March ain't never nothin' new!—
Aprile's altogether too
  Brash fer me! and May—I jes'
  'Bominate its promises,—
Little hints o' sunshine and
Green around the timber-land—
    A few blossoms, and a few
    Chip-birds, and a sprout er two,—
    Drap asleep, and it turns in
    'Fore daylight and *snows* ag'in!—
But when *June* comes—Clear my th'oat
  With wild honey!—Rench my hair
In the dew! and hold my coat!
    Whoop out loud! and th'ow my hat!—
  June wants me, and I'm to spare!
  Spread them shadders anywhere,
  I'll git down and waller there,
    And obleeged to you at that!



A FULL HARVEST

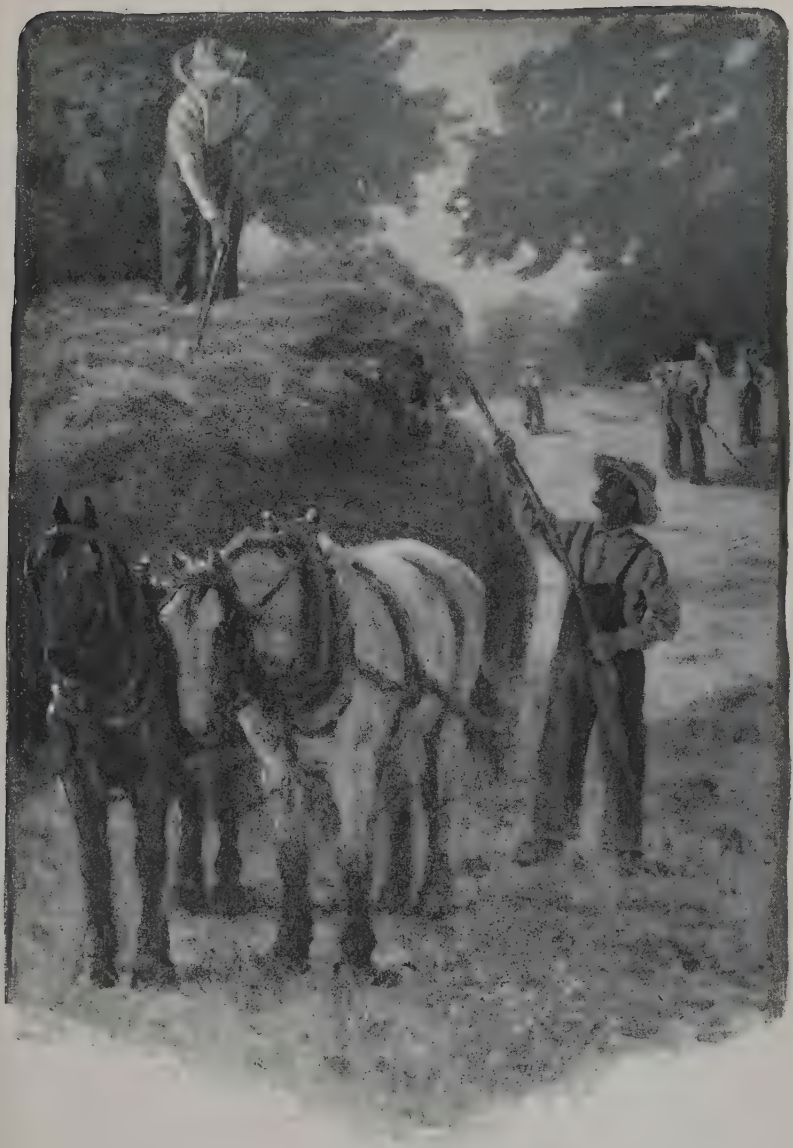
SEEMS like a feller'd ort 'o jes' to-day
Git down and roll and waller, don't you know,
In that-air stubble, and flop up and crow,
Seein' sich craps! I'll undertake to say
There're no wheat's ever turned out thataway
Afore this season!—Folks is keerless tho',
And too fergitful—'caze we'd ort 'o show
More thankfulness!—Jes' looky hyonder, hey?—
And watch that little reaper wadin' thue
That last old yaller hunk o' harvest-ground—
Jes' natchur'ly a-slicin' it in-two
Like honey-comb, and gaumin' it around
The field—like it had nothin' else to do
On'y jes' waste it all on me and you!

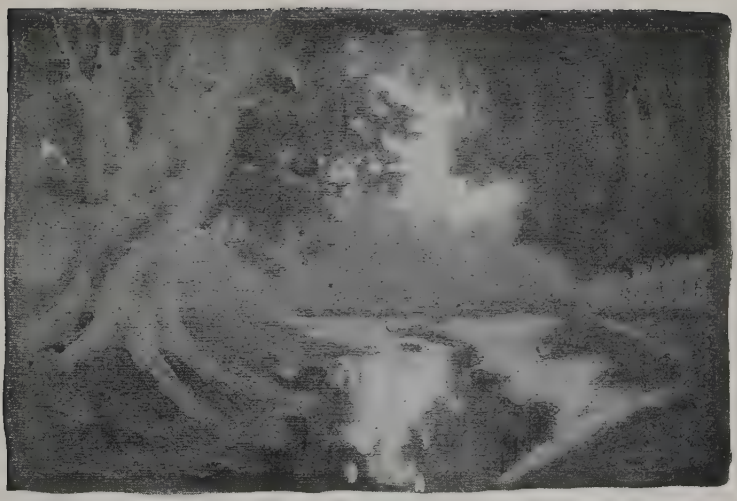
THE CLOVER

SOME sings of the lily, and daisy, and rose,
And the pansies and pinks that the Summertime throws
In the green grassy lap of the medder that lays
Blinkin' up at the skyes through the sunshiney days;
But what is the lily and all of the rest
Of the flowers, to a man with a hart in his brest
That was dipped brimmin' full of the honey and dew
Of the sweet clover-blossoms his babyhood knew?

I never set eyes on a clover-field now,
Er fool round a stable, er climb in the mow,
But my childhood comes back jest as clear and as plane
As the smell of the clover I'm sniffin' again;
And I wunder away in a bare-footed dream,
Whare I tangle my toes in the blossoms that gleam
With the dew of the dawn of the morning of love
Ere it wept ore the graves that I'm weepin' above.

And so I love clover—it seems like a part
Of the sacerdest sorrows and joys of my hart;
And wharever it blossoms, oh, thare let me bow
And thank the good God as I'm thankin' Him now;
And I pray to Him still fer the stren'th when I die,
To go out in the clover and tell it good-bye,
And lovin'ly nestle my face in its bloom
While my soul slips away on a breth of purfume.



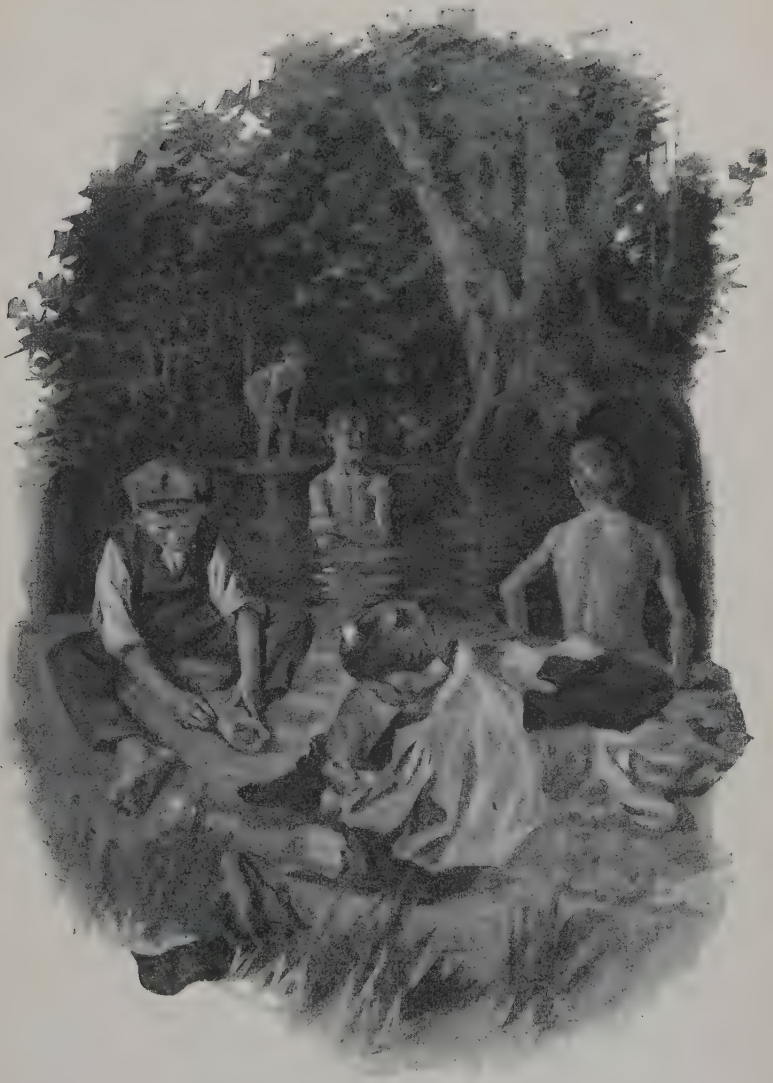


THE OLD SWIMMIN'-HOLE

OH! the old swimmin'-hole! Whare the crick so still and deep
Looked like a baby-river that was laying half asleep,
And the gurgle of the worter round the drift jest below
Sounded like the laugh of something we onc't ust to know
Before we could remember anything but the eyes
Of the angels lookin' out as we left Paradise;
But the merry days of Youth is beyond our controle,
And it's hard to part ferever with the old swimmin'-hole.

Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! In the happy days of yore,
When I ust to lean above it on the old sickamore,
Oh! it showed me a face in its warm sunny tide
That gazed back at me so gay and glorified,
It made me love myself, as I leaped to caress
My shadder smilin' up at me with sich tenderness.
But them days is past and gone, and old Time's tuck his toll
From the old man come back to the old swimmin'-hole.

Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! In the long, lazy days
When the hum-drum of school made so many run-a-ways,
How pleasant was the jurney down the old dusty lane,
Whare the tracks of our bare feet was all printed so plane
You could tell by the dent of the heel and the sole
They was lots o' fun on hands at the old swimmin'-hole.
But the lost joys is past! Let your tears in sorrow roll
Like the rain that ust to dapple up the old swimmin'-hole.
Thare the bullrushes growed, and the cattails so tall,
And the sunshine and shadder fell over it all:



And it mottled the worter with amber and gold
Tel the glad lilies rocked in the ripples that rolled;
And the snake-feeder's four gauzy wings fluttered by
Like the ghost of a daisy dropped out of the sky,
Or a wownded apple-blossom in the breeze's controle,
As it cut acrost some orchurd to'rds the old swimmin'-hole.

Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! When I last saw the place,
The scenes was all changed, like the change in my face;
The bridge of the railroad now crosses the spot
Whare the old divin'-log lays sunk and fergot.
And I stray down the banks whare the trees ust to be—
But never again will theyr shade shelter me!
And I wish in my sorrow I could strip to the soul,
And dive off in my grave like the old swimmin'-hole.

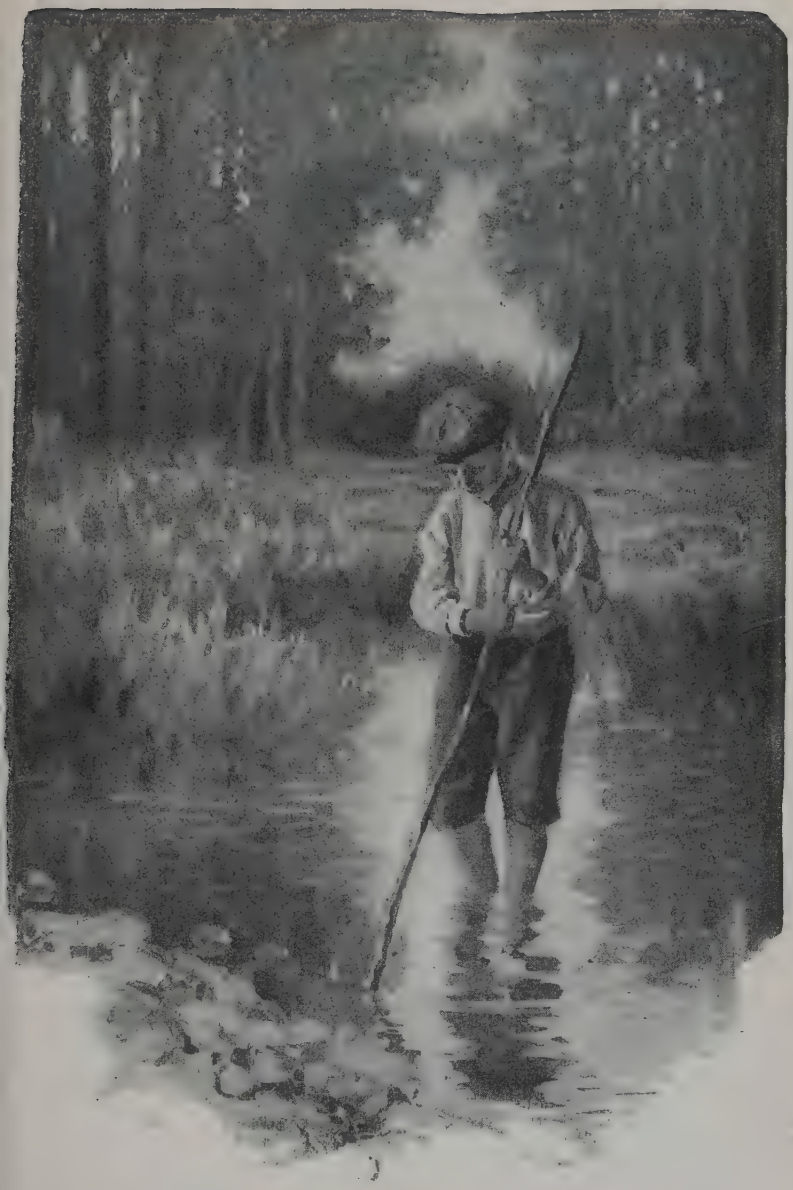
THE ALL-GOLDEN

I

THROUGH every happy line I sing
I feel the tonic of the Spring.
The day is like an old-time face
That gleams across some grassy place
An old-time face—an old-time chum
Who rises from the grave to come
And lure me back along the ways
Of time's all-golden yesterdays.
Sweet day! to thus remind me of
The truant boy I used to love—
To set, once more, his finger-tips
Against the blossom of his lips,
And pipe for me the signal known
By none but him and me alone!

II

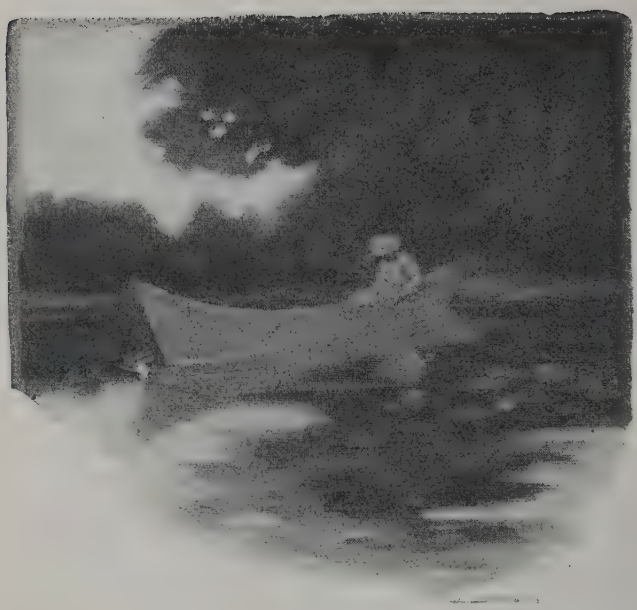
I see, across the school-room floor,
The shadow of the open door,
And dancing dust and sunshine blent
Slanting the way the morning went,
And beckoning my thoughts afar
Where reeds and running waters are;



Where amber-colored bayous glass
The half-drown'd weeds and wisps of grass.
Where sprawling frogs, in loveless key,
Sing on and on incessantly.
Against the green wood's dim expanse
The cattail tilts its tufted lance,
While on its tip—one might declare
The white "snake-feeder" blossomed there!

III

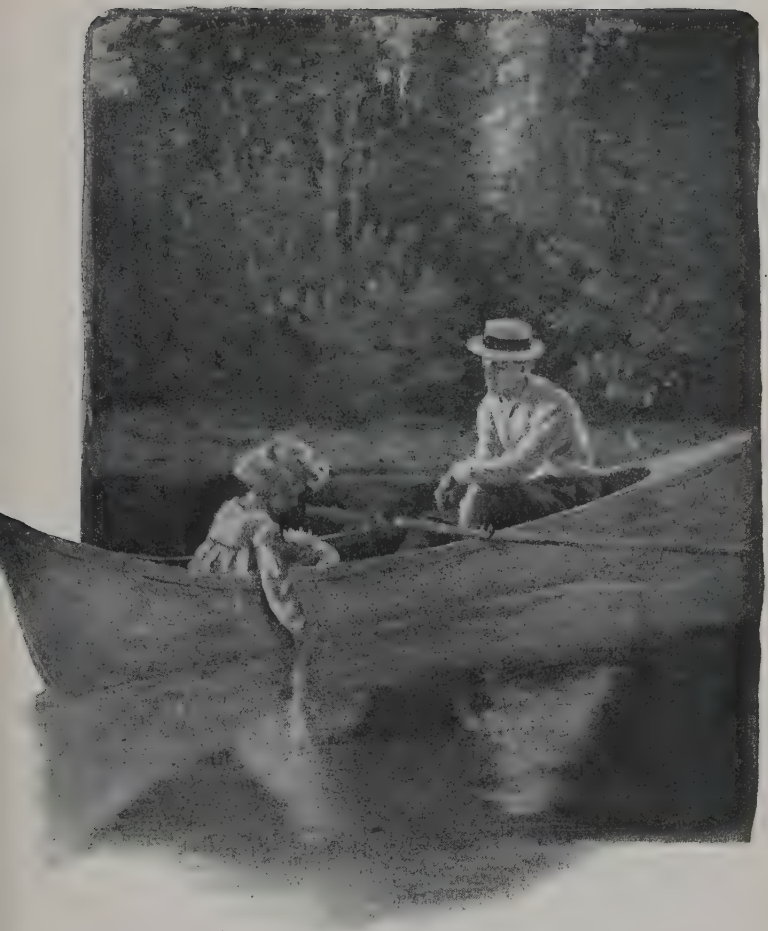
I catch my breath as children do
In woodland swings when life is new,
And all the blood is warm as wine
And tingles with a tang divine.
My soul soars up the atmosphere
And sings aloud where God can hear,
And all my being leans intent
To mark His smiling wonderment.
O gracious dream, and gracious time,
And gracious theme, and gracious rhyme—
When buds of Spring begin to blow
In blossoms that we used to know
And lure us back along the ways
Of time's all-golden yesterdays!



WITH THE CURRENT

RAREST mood of all the year!
Aimless, idle, and content—
Sky and wave and atmosphere
Wholly indolent.

Little daughter, loose the band
From your tresses—let them pour
Shadow-like o'er arm and hand
Idling at the oar.



SAN RAFAEL
PUBLIC LIBRARY
SAN RAFAEL, CAL.

Low and clear, and pure and deep,
  Ripples of the river sing—
Water-lilies, half asleep,
    Drowsed with listening:

Tremulous reflex of skies—
  Skies above and skies below,—
Paradise and Paradise
    Blending even so!

Blossoms with their leaves unrolled
  Laughingly, as they were lips
Cleft with ruddy beaten gold
    Tongues of pollen-tips.

Rush and reed, and thorn and vine,
  Clumped with grasses lithe and tall—
With a web of summer-shine
    Woven round it all.

Back and forth, and to and fro—
  Flashing scale and wing as one,—
Dragon-flies that come and go,
    Shuttled by the sun.

Fairy liits and lullabies,
  Fine as fantasy conceives,—
Echoes wrought of cricket-cries
    Sifted through the leaves.

O'er the rose, with drowsy buzz,
  Hangs the bee, and stays his kiss,
Even as my fancy does,
    Gypsy, over this.

Let us both be children—share
  Youth's glad voyage night and day,
Drift adown it, half aware,
    Anywhere we may.—

Drift and curve and deviate,
  Veer and eddy, float and flow,
Waver, swerve and undulate,
    As the bubbles go.

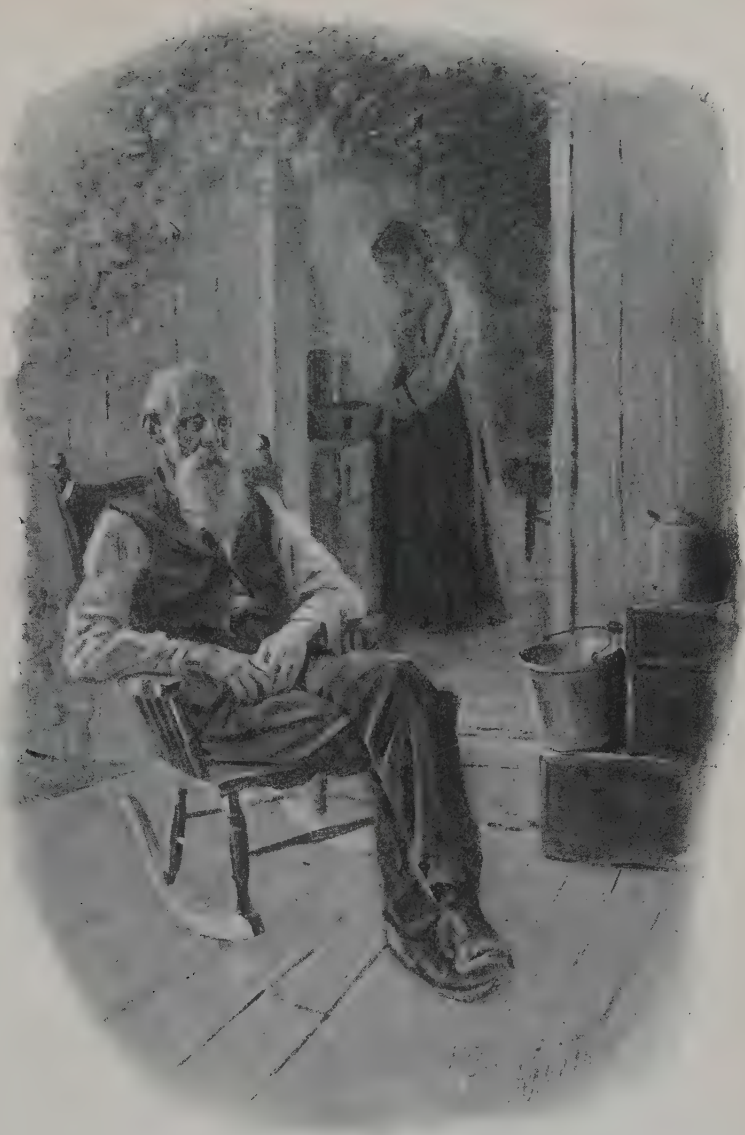
OLD-FASHIONED ROSES

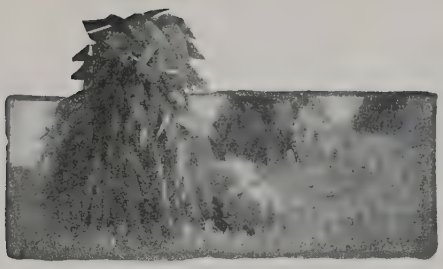
THEY ain't no style about 'em,
And they're sorto' pale and faded,
Yit the doorway here, without 'em,
Would be lonesomer, and shaded
With a good 'eal blacker shadder
Than the morning-glories makes,
And the sunshine would look sadder
Fer their good old-fashion' sakes.

I like 'em 'cause they kindo'-
  Sorto' *make* a feller like 'em!
And I tell you, when I find a
  Bunch out whur the sun kin strike 'em,
    It allus sets me thinkin'
      O' the ones 'at used to grow
    And peek in thro' the chinkin'
      O' the cabin, don't you know!

And then I think o' mother,
  And how she ust to love 'em—
When they wuzn't any other,
  'Less she found 'em up above 'em!
    And her eyes, afore she shut 'em,
      Whispered with a smile and said
    We must pick a bunch and putt 'em
      In her hand when she wuz dead.

But, as I wuz a-sayin',
  They ain't no style about 'em
Very gaudy er displayin',
  But I wouldn't be without 'em,—
    'Cause I'm happier in these posies,
      And the hollyhawks and sich,
    Than the hummin'-bird 'at noses
      In the roses of the rich.





THE KING

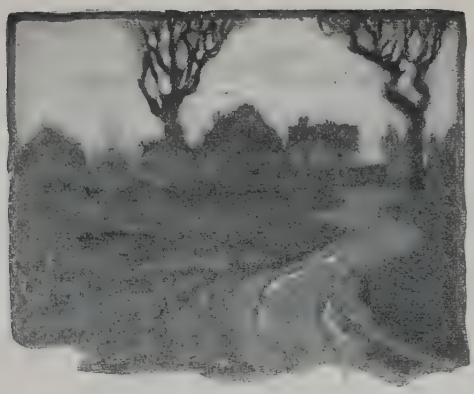
THEY rode right out of the morning sun—
A glimmering, glittering cavalcade
Of knights and ladies and every one
In princely sheen arrayed;
And the king of them all, O he rode ahead,
With a helmet of gold, and a plume of red
That spurted about in the breeze and bled
In the bloom of the everglade.

And they rode right over the dewy lawn,
With brave, glad banners of every hue
That rolled in ripples, as they rode on
In splendor, two and two;
And the tinkling links of the golden reins
Of the steeds they rode rang such refrains
As the castanets in a dream of Spain's
Intensest gold and blue.

And they rode and rode; and the steeds they neighed
And pranced, and the sun on their glossy hides
Flickered and lightened and glanced and played
Like the moon on rippling tides;
And their manes were silken, and thick and strong,
And their tails were flossy, and fetlock-long,
And jostled in time to the teeming throng,
And their knightly song besides.

Clank of scabbard and jingle of spur,
And the fluttering sash of the queen went wild
In the wind, and the proud king glanced at her
As one at a wilful child,—
And as knight and lady away they flew,
And the banners flapped, and the falcon, too,
And the lances flashed and the bugle blew,
He kissed his hand and smiled.—

And then, like a slanting sunlit shower,
The pageant glittered across the plain,
And the turf spun back, and the wildweed flower
Was only a crimson stain.
And a dreamer's eyes they are downward cast,
As he blends these words with the wailing blast:
"It is the King of the Year rides past!"
And Autumn is here again.



SLUMBER-SONG

SLEEP, little one! The Twilight folds her gloom
Full tenderly about the drowsy Day,
And all his tinseled hours of light and bloom
Like toys are laid away.

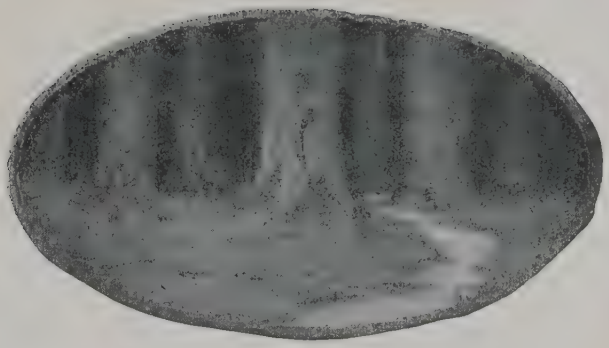
Sleep! sleep! The noon-sky's airy cloud of white
Has deepened wide o'er all the azure plain;
And, trailing through the leaves, the skirts of Night
Are wet with dews as rain.

But rest thou sweetly, smiling in thy dreams,
With round fists tossed like roses o'er thy head,
And thy tranc'd lips and eyelids kissed with gleams
Of rapture perfected.

THE YELLOW-BIRD

HEY! my little Yellow-bird,
What you doing there?
Like a flashing sun-ray,
Flitting everywhere:
Dangling down the tall weeds
And the hollyhocks,
And the lordly sunflowers
Along the garden-walks.

Ho! my gallant Golden-bill,
Pecking 'mongst the weeds,
You must have for breakfast
Golden flower-seeds:
Won't you tell a little fellow
What you have for *tea?*—
'Spect a peck o' yellow, mellow
Pippin on the tree.



A COUNTRY PATHWAY

I COME upon it suddenly, alone—
A little pathway winding in the weeds
That fringe the roadside; and with dreams my own,
I wander as it leads.

Full wistfully along the slender way,
Through summer tan of freckled shade and shine,
I take the path that leads me as it may—
Its every choice is mine.

A chipmunk, or a sudden-whirring quail,
Is startled by my step as on I fare—
A garter-snake across the dusty trail
Glances and—is not there.

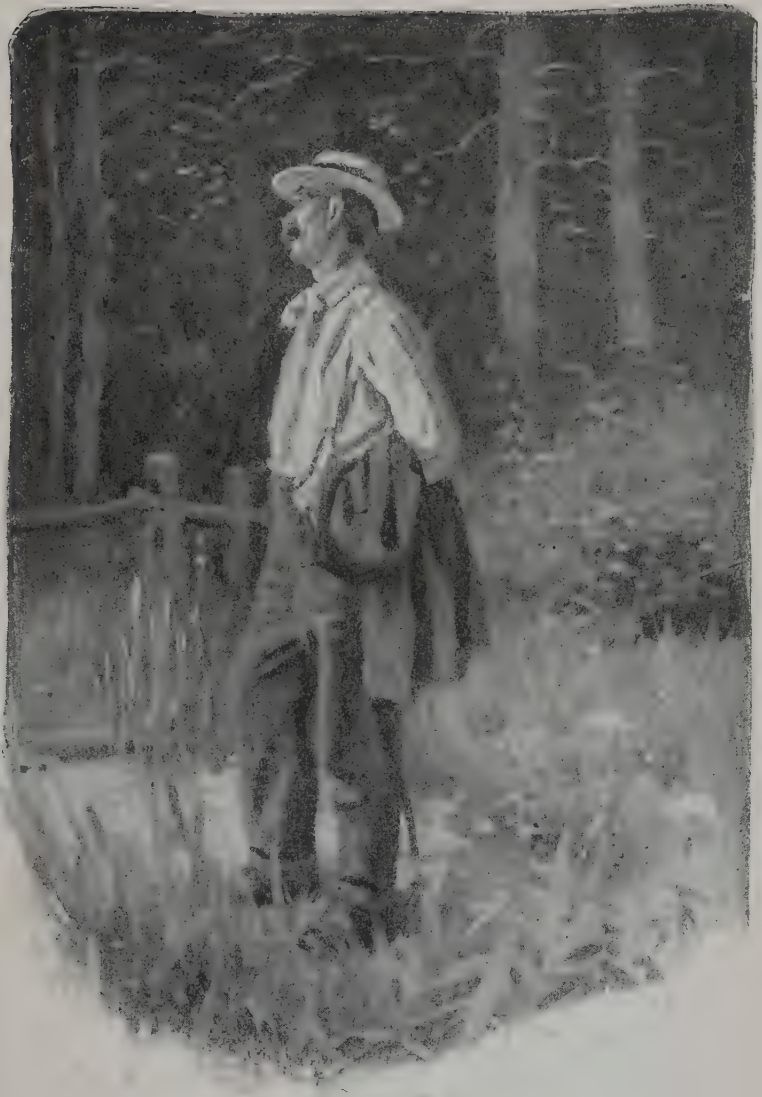
Above the arching jimson-weeds flare twos
And twos of sallow-yellow butterflies,
Like blooms of lorn primroses blowing loose
When autumn winds arise.

The trail dips—dwindles—broadens then, and lifts
Itself astride a cross-road dubiously,
And, from the fennel marge beyond it, drifts
Still onward, beckoning me.

And though it needs must lure me mile on mile
Out of the public highway, still I go,
My thoughts, far in advance in Indian-file,
Allure me even so.

Why, I am as a long-lost boy that went
At dusk to bring the cattle to the bars,
And was not found again, though Heaven lent
His mother all the stars

With which to seek him through that awful night.
O years of nights as vain!—Stars never rise
But well might miss their glitter in the light
Of tears in mother-eyes!



SAN RAFAEL PUBLIC LIBRARY

So—on, with quickened breaths, I follow still—
  My avant-courier must be obeyed!
Thus am I led, and thus the path, at will,
  Invites me to invade

A meadow's precincts, where my daring guide
  Clambers the steps of an old-fashioned stile,
And stumbles down again, the other side,
  To gambol there a while

In pranks of hide-and-seek, as on ahead
  I see it running, while the clover-stalks
Shake rosy fists at me as though they said—
  "You dog our country-walks

"And mutilate us with your walking-stick!—
  We will not suffer tamely what you do
And warn you at your peril,—for we'll sic
  Our bumblebees on you!"

But I smile back, in airy nonchalance,—
  The more determined on my wayward quest,
As some bright memory a moment dawns
  A morning in my breast—

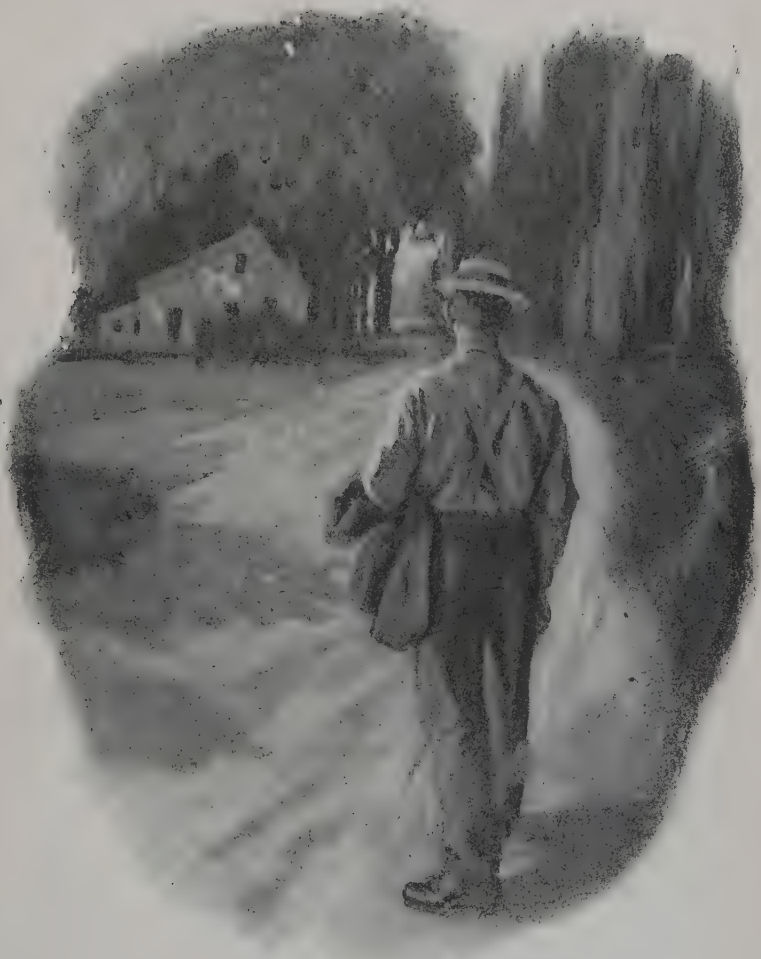
Sending a thrill that hurries me along
In faulty similes of childish skips,
Enthused with lithe contortions of a song
Performing on my lips.

In wild meanderings o'er pasture wealth—
Erratic wanderings through dead'ning-lands,
Where sly old brambles, plucking me by stealth,
Put berries in my hands:

Or the path climbs a boulder—wades a slough—
Or, rollicking through buttercups and flags,
Goes gaily dancing o'er a deep bayou
On old tree-trunks and snags:

Or, at the creek, leads o'er a limpid pool
Upon a bridge the stream itself has made,
With some Spring-freshet for the mighty tool
That its foundation laid.

I pause a moment here to bend and muse,
With dreamy eyes, on my reflection, where
A boat-backed bug drifts on a helpless cruise,
Or wildly oars the air,



As, dimly seen, the pirate of the brook—
The pike, whose jaunty hulk denotes his speed—
Swings pivoting about, with wary look
Of low and cunning greed.

Till, filled with other thought, I turn again
To where the pathway enters in a realm
Of lordly woodland, under sovereign reign
Of towering oak and elm.

A puritanic quiet here reviles
The almost whispered warble from the hedge,
And takes a locust's rasping voice and files
The silence to an edge.

In such a solitude my somber way
Strays like a misanthrope within a gloom
Of his own shadows—till the perfect day
Bursts into sudden bloom,

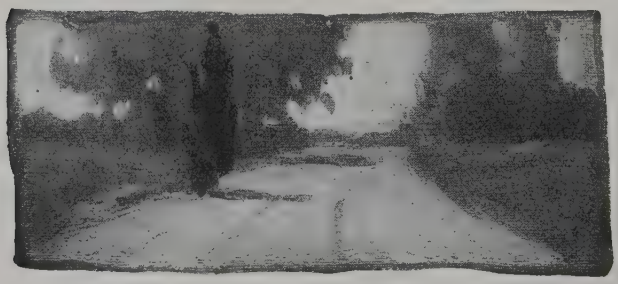
And crowns a long, declining stretch of space,
Where King Corn's armies lie with flags unfurled,
And where the valley's dint in Nature's face
Dimples a smiling world.

And lo! through mists that may not be dispelled,
I see an old farm homestead, as in dreams,
Where, like a gem in costly setting held,
The old log cabin gleams.

. . . . . .

O darling Pathway! lead me bravely on
Adown your valley-way, and run before
Among the roses crowding up the lawn
And thronging at the door,—

And carry up the echo there that shall
Arouse the drowsy dog, that he may bay
The household out to greet the prodigal
That wanders home to-day.

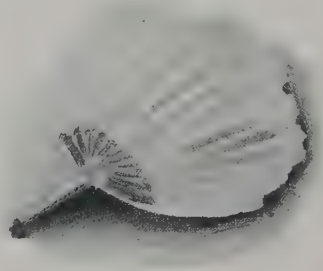


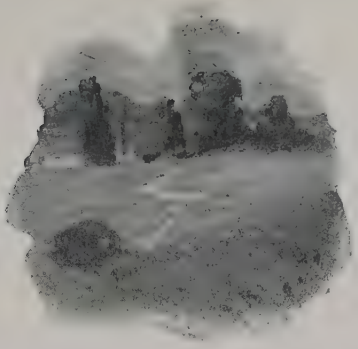
THE BALLADE OF THE COMING RAIN

WHEN the morning swoons in its highest heat,
And the sunshine dims, and no dark shade
Streaks the dust of the dazzling street,
And the long straw splits in the lemonade;
When the circus lags in a sad parade,
And the drum throbs dull as a pulse of pain,
And the breezeless flags hang limp and frayed—
O then is the time to look for rain.

When the man on the watering cart bumps by,
  Trilling the air of an old fife-tune,
With a dull, soiled smile, and one shut eye,
  Lost in a dream of the afternoon;
  When the awning sags like a lank balloon,
And a thick sweat stands on the window-pane,
  And a five-cent fan is a priceless boon—
O then is the time to look for rain.

When the goldfish tank is a grimy gray,
  And the dummy stands at the clothing store
With a cap pulled on in a rakish way,
  And a rubber-coat with the hind before;
  When the man in the barber chair flops o'er
And the chin he wags has a telltale stain,
  And the bootblack lurks at the open door—
O then is the time to look for rain.





THE MUSKINGUM VALLEY

THE Muskingum Valley!—How longin' the gaze
A feller throws back on its long summer-days,
When the smiles of its blossoms and *my* smiles wuz one-
And-the-same, from the rise to the set o' the sun:
Wher' the hills sloped as soft as the dawn down to noon,
And the river run by like an old fiddle-tune,
And the hours glided past as the bubbles 'ud glide,
All so loaferin'-like, 'long the path o' the tide.

In the Muskingum Valley—it 'peared like the skies
Looked lovin' on me as my own mother's eyes,
While the laughin'-sad song of the stream seemed to be
Like a lullaby angels was wastin' on me—

Tel, swimmin' the air, like the gossamer's thread,
'Twixt the blue underneath and the blue overhead,
My thoughts went a-stray in that so-to-speak realm
Wher' Sleep bared her breast as a piller fer them.

In the Muskingum Valley, though far, far a-way,
I know that the winter is bleak there to-day—
No bloom ner perfume on the brambles er trees—
Wher' the buds used to bloom, now the icicles freeze.—
That the grass is all hid 'long the side of the road
Wher' the deep snow has drifted and shifted and blowed—
And I feel in my life the same changes is there,—
The frost in my heart, and the snow in my hair.

But, Muskingum Valley! my memory sees
Not the white on the ground, but the green in the trees—
Not the froze'-over gorge, but the current, as clear
And warm as the drop that has jes trickled here;
Not the choked-up ravine, and the hills topped with snow,
But the grass and the blossoms I knowed long ago
When my little bare feet wundered down wher' the stream
In the Muskingum Valley flowed on like a dream.

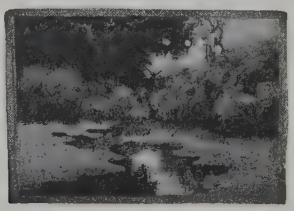
WHEN THE GREEN GITS BACK IN THE TREES

IN Spring, when the green gits back in the trees,
And the sun comes out and *stays,*
And yer boots pulls on with a good tight squeeze,
And you think of yer bare-foot days;
When you *ort* to work and you want to *not,*
And you and yer wife agrees
It's time to spade up the garden-lot,
When the green gits back in the trees—
Well! work is the least o' *my* idees
When the green, you know, gits back in the trees!

WHEN THE GREEN GITS BACK IN THE TREES

When the green gits back in the trees, and bees
  Is a-buzzin' aroun' ag'in,
In that kind of a lazy go-as-you-please
  Old gait they bum roun' in;
When the groun's all bald whare the hay-rick stood,
  And the crick's riz, and the breeze
Coaxes the bloom in the old dogwood,
  And the green gits back in the trees,—
    I like, as I say, in sich scenes as these,
    The time when the green gits back in the trees!

When the whole tail-feathers o' Wintertime
  Is all pulled out and gone!
And the sap it thaws and begins to climb,
  And the swet it starts out on
A feller's forred, a-gittin' down
  At the old spring on his knees—
I kindo' like jest a-loaferin' roun'
  When the green gits back in the trees—
    Jest a-potterin' roun' as I—durn—please—
    When the green, you know, gits back in the trees!



DAWN, NOON AND DEWFALL

DAWN, noon and dewfall! Bluebird and robin
Up and at it airly, and the orchard-blossoms bobbin'!
Peekin' from the winder, half-awake, and wishin'
I could go to sleep agin as well as go a-fishin'!

On the apern o' the dam, legs a-danglin' over,
Drowsy-like with sound o' worter and the smell o' clover:
Fish all out a-visitin'—'cept some dratted minnor!
Yes, and mill shet down at last and hands is gone to dinner.

Trompin' home acrost the fields: Lightnin'-bugs a-blinkin'
In the wheat like sparks o' things feller keeps a-thinkin':—
Mother waitin' supper, and the childern there to cherr me!
And fiddle on the kitchen-wall a-jist a-eechin' fer me!

THE OLD HAY-MOW

THE Old Hay-mow's the place to play
Fer boys, when it's a rainy day!
I good-'eal ruther be up there
Than down in town, er anywhere!

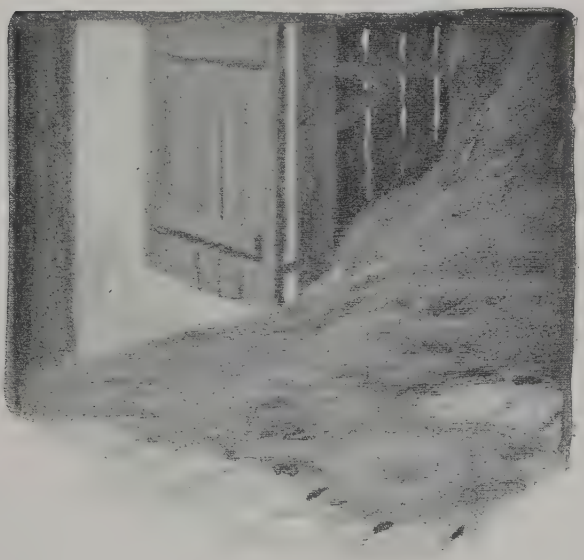
When I play in our stable-loft,
The good old hay's so dry an' soft,
An' feels so fine, an' smells so sweet,
I 'most ferget to go an' eat.

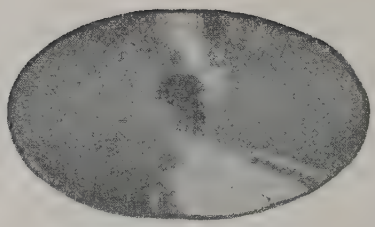
An' one time wunst I *did* ferget
To go 'tel dinner was all et,—
An' they had short-cake—an'—Bud he
Hogged up the piece Ma saved fer me!

Nen I won't let him play no more
In our hay-mow where I keep store
An' got hen-eggs to sell,—an' shoo
The cackle-un old hen out, too!

An' nen, when Aunty she was here
A-visitun from Renssalaer,
An' bringed my little cousin,—*he*
Can come up there an' play with me.

But, after while—when Bud he bets
'At I can't turn no summersetts,—
I let him come up, ef he can
Ac' ha'f-way like a gentleman!





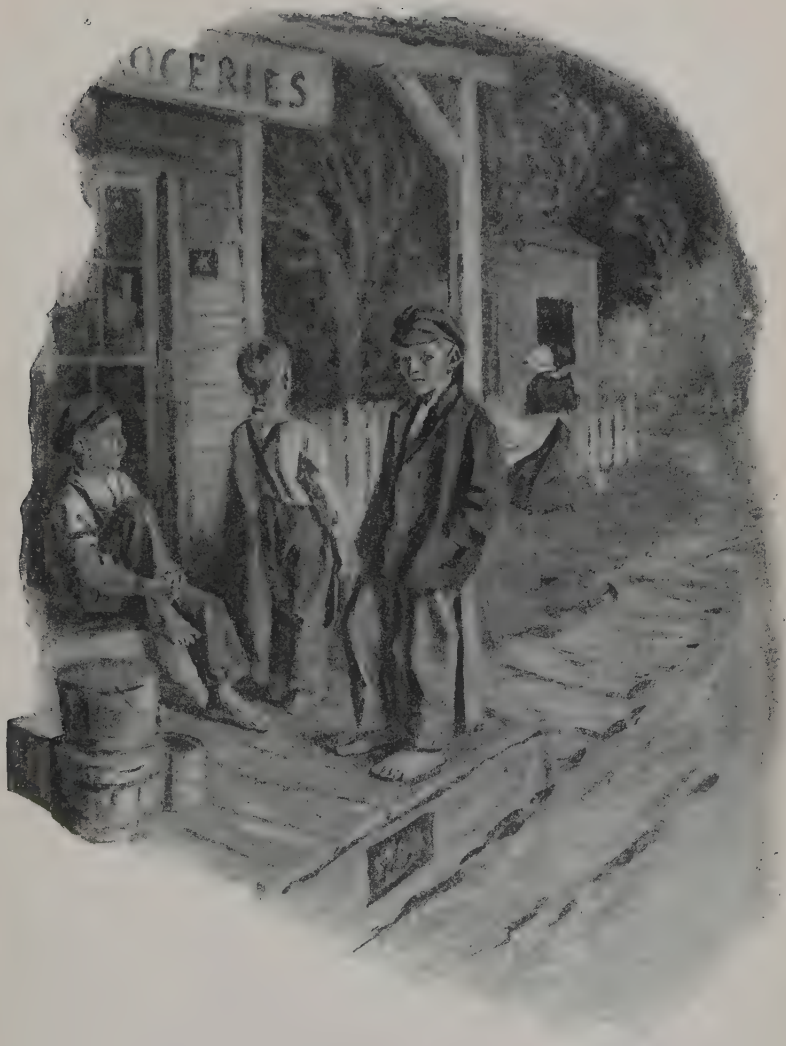
A SUDDEN SHOWER

BAREFOOTED boys scud up the street,
Or scurry under sheltering sheds;
And school-girl faces, pale and sweet,
Gleam from the shawls about their heads.

Doors bang; and mother-voices call
From alien homes; and rusty gates
Are slammed; and high above it all,
The thunder grim reverberates.

And then, abrupt,—the rain! the rain!—
The earth lies gasping; and the eyes
Behind the streaming window-pane
Smile at the trouble of the skies.

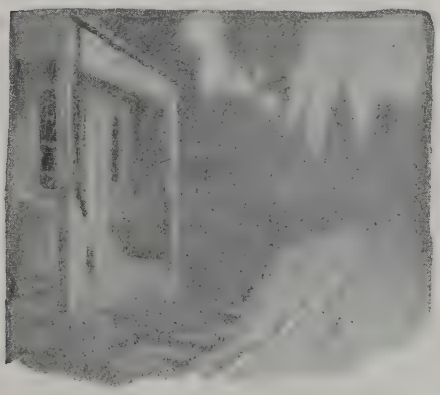
The highway smokes; sharp echoes ring;
The cattle bawl and cow-bells clank;
And into town comes galloping
The farmer's horse, with steaming flank.


OCERIES

The swallow dips beneath the eaves,
  And flirts his plumes and folds his wings;
And under the catawba leaves
  The caterpillar curls and clings.

The bumblebee is pelted down
  The wet stem of the hollyhock;
And sullenly, in spattered brown,
  The cricket leaps the garden-walk.

Within, the baby claps his hands
  And crows with rapture strange and vague;
Without, beneath the rose-bush stands
  A dripping rooster on one leg.



A NOON INTERVAL

A DEEP, delicious hush in earth and sky—
A gracious lull—since, from its wakening,
The morn has been a feverish, restless thing
In which the pulse of Summer ran too high
And riotous, as though its heart went nigh
To bursting with delights past uttering:
Now, as an o'erjoyed child may cease to sing
All falteringly at play, with drowsy eye
Draining the pictures of a fairy-tale
To brim his dreams with—there comes o'er the day
A loathful silence, wherein all sounds fail
Like loitering tones of some faint roundelay . . .
No wakeful effort longer may avail —
The wand waves, and the dozer sinks away.

A SONG

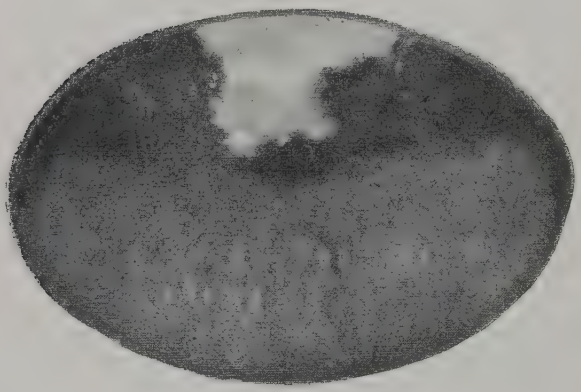
THERE is ever a song somewhere, my dear;
There is ever a something sings alway:
There's the song of the lark when the skies are clear,
And the song of the thrush when the skies are gray.
The sunshine showers across the grain,
And the bluebird trills in the orchard trees;
And in and out, when the eaves drip rain,
The swallows are twittering ceaselessly.

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
Be the skies above or dark or fair,
There is ever a song that our hearts may hear—
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear—
There is ever a song somewhere!

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
In the midnight black, or the mid-day blue:
The robin pipes when the sun is here,
And the cricket chirrups the whole night through.

The buds may blow, and the fruit may grow,
And the autumn leaves drop crisp and sear;
But whether the sun, or the rain, or the snow,
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear.

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
Be the skies above or dark or fair,
There is ever a song that our hearts may hear—
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear—
There is ever a song somewhere!



ON THE SUNNY SIDE

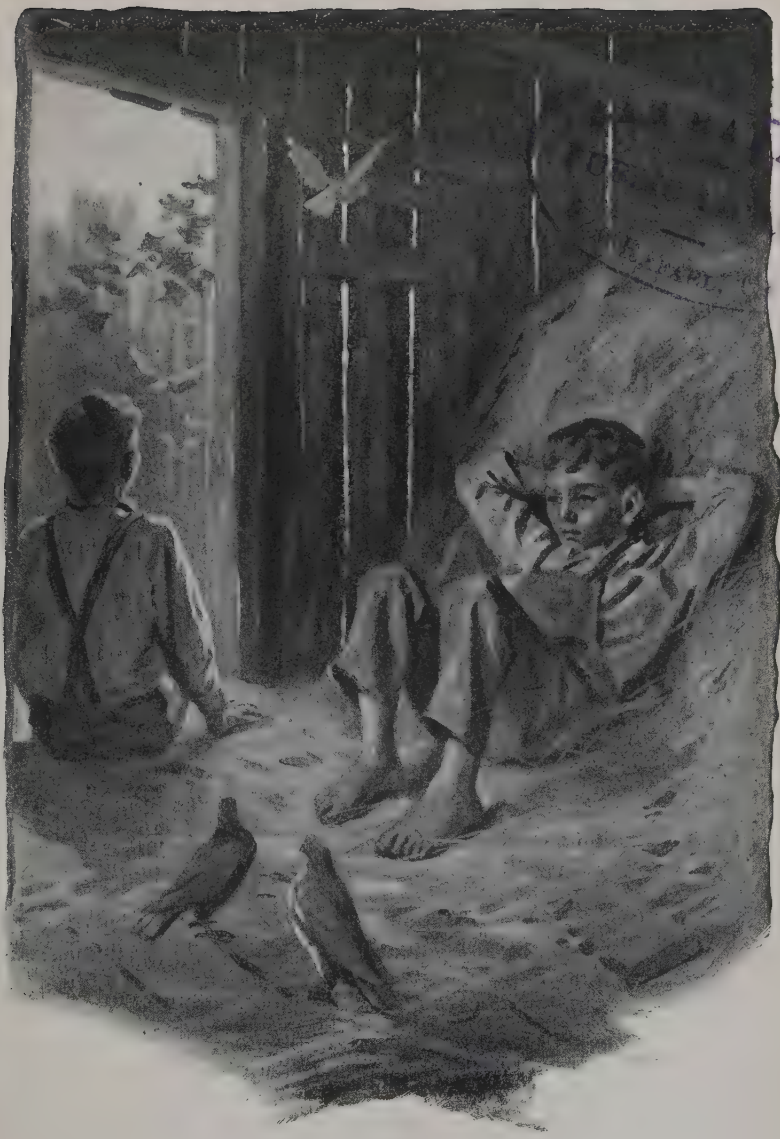
HI and whoop-hooray, boys!
Sing a song of cheer!
Here's a holiday, boys,
Lasting half a year!
Round the world, and half is
Shadow we have tried;
Now we're where the laugh is,—
On the sunny side!

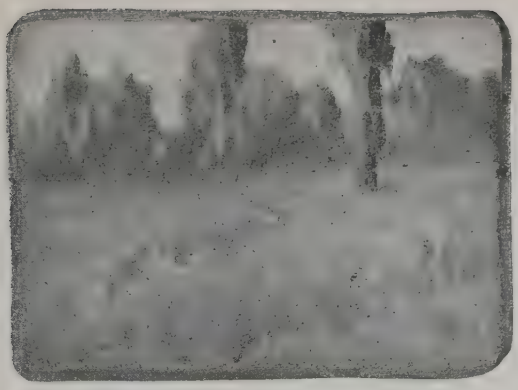
Pigeons coo and mutter,
Strutting high aloof
Where the sunbeams flutter
Through the stable roof.
Hear the chickens cheep, boys,
And the hen with pride
Clucking them to sleep, boys,
On the sunny side!

Hear the clacking guinea;
Hear the cattle moo;
Hear the horses whinny,
Looking out at you!
On the hitching-block, boys,
Grandly satisfied,
See the old peacock, boys,
On the sunny side!

Robins in the peach-tree;
Bluebirds in the pear;
Blossoms over each tree
In the orchard there!
All the world's in joy, boys,
Glad and glorified
As a romping boy, boys,
On the sunny side!

Where's a heart as mellow?
Where's a soul as free?
Where is any fellow
We would rather be?
Just ourselves or none, boys,
World around and wide,
Laughing in the sun, boys,
On the sunny side!





JUNE

O QUEENLY month of indolent repose!
I drink thy breath in sips of rare perfume,
As in thy downy lap of clover-bloom
I nestle like a drowsy child and doze
The lazy hours away. The zephyr throws
The shifting shuttle of the Summer's loom
And weaves a damask-work of gleam and gloom
Before thy listless feet. The lily blows
A bugle-call of fragrance o'er the glade;
And, wheeling into ranks, with plume and spear,
Thy harvest-armies gather on parade;
While, faint and far away, yet pure and clear,
A voice calls out of alien lands of shade:—
All hail the Peerless Goddess of the Year!

HE AND I

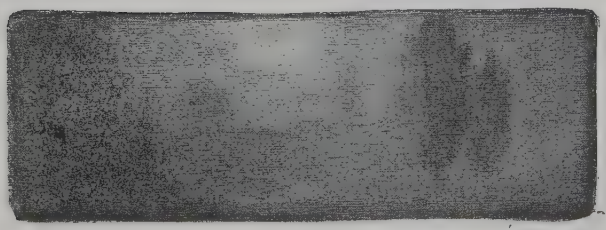
JUST drifting on together—
He and I—
As through the balmy weather
Of July
Drift two thistle-tufts imbedded
Each in each—by zephyrs wedded—
Touring upward, giddy-headed,
For the sky.

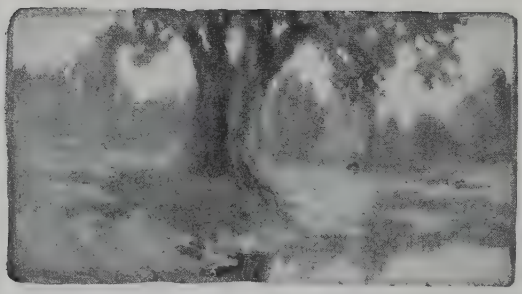
And, veering up and onward,
Do we seem
Forever drifting downward
In a dream,
Where we meet song-birds that know us,
And the winds their kisses blow us,
While the years flow far below us
Like a stream.

And we are happy—very—
He and I—
Aye, even glad and merry
Though on high
The heavens are sometimes shrouded
By the midnight storm, and clouded
Till the pallid moon is crowded
From the sky.

My spirit ne'er expresses
Any choice
But to clothe him with caresses
And rejoice;
And as he laughs, it is in
Such a tone the moonbeams glisten
And the stars come out to listen
To his voice.

And so, whate'er the weather,
He and I,—
With our lives linked thus together,
Float and fly
As two thistle-tufts imbedded
Each in each—by zephyrs wedded—
Touring upward, giddy-headed,
For the sky.





UP AND DOWN OLD BRANDYWINE

UP and down old Brandywine,
In the days 'at's past and gone—
With a dad-burn hook-and-line
And a saplin'-pole—i swan!
I've had more fun, to the square
Inch, than ever *any*where!
Heaven to come can't discount *mine*
Up and down old Brandywine!

Hain't no sense in *wishin'*—yit
Wisht to goodness I *could* jes
"Gee" the blame' world round and git
Back to that old happiness!—
Kindo' drive back in the shade
"The old Covered Bridge" there laid
'Crosst the crick, and sorto' soak
My soul over, hub and spoke!

Honest, now!—it hain't no *dream*
'At I'm wantin',—but *the fac's*
As they wuz; the same old stream,
And the same old times, i jacks!—
Gim me back my bare feet—and
Stonebruise too!—And scratched and tanned!
And let hottest dog-days shine
Up and down old Brandywine!

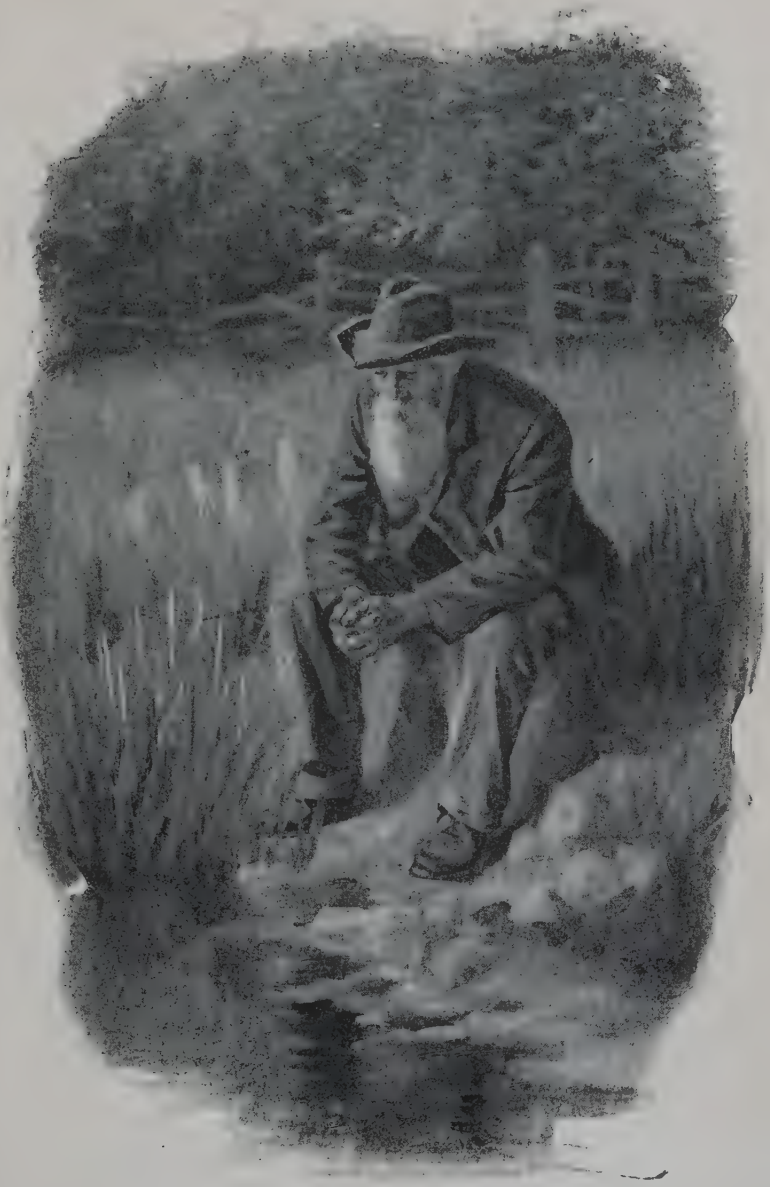
In and on betwixt the trees
'Long the banks, pour down yer noon,
Kindo' curdled with the breeze
And the yallerhammer's tune;
And the smokin', chokin' dust
O' the turnpike at its wusst—
Saturd'ys, say, when it seems
Road's jes jammed with country teams!—

Whilse the old town, fur away
'Crosst the hazy pastur'-land,
Dozed-like in the heat o' day
Peaceful' as a hired hand.
Jolt the gravel th'ough the floor
O' the old bridge!—grind and roar
With yer blame' percession-line—
Up and down old Brandywine!

Souse me and my new straw-hat
Off the foot-log!—what *I* care?—
Fist shoved in the crown o' that—
Like the old Clown ust to wear.
Wouldn't swop it fer a' old
Gin-u-wine raal crown o' gold!—
Keep yer *King* ef you'll gim me
Jes the boy I ust to be!

Spill my fishin'-worms! er steal
My best "goggle-eye"!—but you
Can't lay hands on joys I feel
Nibblin' like they ust to do!
So, in memory, to-day
Same old ripple lips away
At my "cork" and saggin' line
Up and down old Brandywine!

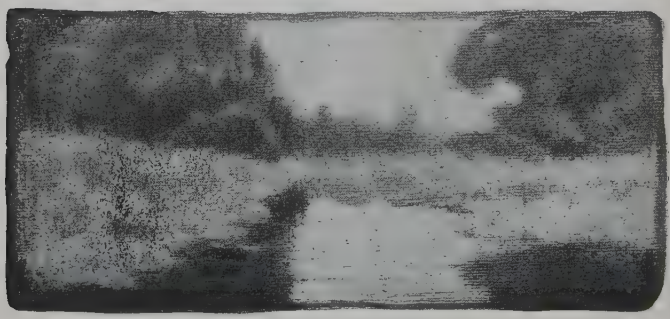
There the logs is, round the hill,
Where "Old Irvin" ust to lift
Out sunfish from daylight till
Dew-fall—'fore he'd leave "The Drift"
And give *us* a chance—and then
Kindo' fish back home again,
Ketchin' 'em jes left and right
Where *we* hadn't got "a bite"!



Er, 'way windin' out and in,—
  Old path th'ough the iurnweeds
And dog-fennel to yer chin—
  Then come suddent, th'ough the reeds
    And cat-tails, smack into where
    Them-air woods-hogs ust to scare
    Us clean 'crosst the County-line,
    Up and down old Brandywine!

But the dim roar o' the dam
  It 'ud coax us furder still
To'rds the old race, slow and ca'm,
  Slidin' on to Huston's mill—
    Where, I 'spect, "The Freeport crowd"
    Never *warmed* to us er 'lowed
    We wuz quite so overly
    Welcome as we aimed to be.

Still it 'peared-like ever'thing—
  Fur away from home as *there*—
Had more *relish*-like, i jing!—
  Fish in stream, er bird in air!
    O them rich old bottom-lands,
    Past where Cowden's Schoolhouse stands!
    Wortermelons—*master-mine!*
    Up and down old Brandywine!

And sich pop-paws!—Lumps o' raw
Gold and green,—jes oozy th'ough
With ripe yaller—like you've saw
Custard-pie with no crust to:
And jes *gorges* o' wild plums,
Till a feller'd suck his thumbs
Clean up to his elbows! *My!*—
Me some more er lem me die!

Up and down old Brandywine!
Stripe me with pokeberry-juice!—
Flick me with a pizenvine
And yell *"Yip!"* and lem me loose!
—Old now as I then wuz young,
'F I could sing as I *have* sung,
Song 'ud surely ring *dee-vine*
Up and down old Brandywine!